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The Tennessee Evangelist

By Ashley S. Johnson.

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Ashley B. Johnson.

THE

TENNESSEE EVANGELIST

A SERIES OF TEN SERMONS

BY

ASHLEY S. JOHNSON

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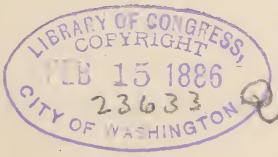
"Preach the word." "Do the work of an evangelist."—PAUL.



CINCINNATI
STANDARD PUBLISHING COMPANY
1886

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PREFACE.

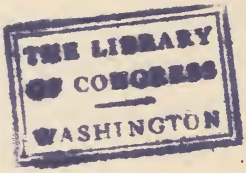
"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 18–20).

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark xvi. 15, 16).

"Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, and ye are witnesses of these things" (Luke xxiv. 46–48).

"Receive ye the Holy Spirit: whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them: and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained" (John xx. 22, 23).

Inquire within.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THE TENNESSEE EVANGELIST.

SERMON I.

THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER.

TEXT: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth; but shun profane and vain babblings, for they will increase unto more ungodliness" (II. Tim. ii. 15, 16).

The Bible is conceded to be the oldest, the grandest, and the most wonderful book in the world; and yet no book is so much neglected, so badly treated, so carelessly read, or made responsible for so much that is false, delusive and destructive. It is said to be the will of God; but its friends, its apparent friends—its enemies, in fact—do not hesitate to use it as a book that is devoid of system, plan or arrangement; and they therefore conclude that one part is as good as another for this dispensation, and profess to find the way of salvation in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, or the Psalms, as well as in the New Testament. Inasmuch as it is all true, I can learn my duty, what I must do to be saved from my sins, in Proverbs, or Daniel, as well as I can in John or Acts! It is all good for me, and I must, therefore, receive each part, each of the distinct and separate books of which it is composed, without any effort to discover when, by whom, or for what purpose, they were written! This view of the Bible is prevalent among many who pretend to be

orthodox Christians. It does not matter to them when it was written, or whether it was intended for Jew or Gentile, for patriarch or prophet, for apostle or evangelist, for saint or sinner, for the Old Testament times or the New Testament times; they proceed on their journey rejoicing, as they say, in the hope of heaven, when they have no definite idea of the plan of salvation made known through Jesus Christ and the twelve apostles, or the relation this plan sustains to antecedent ages of the world.

What is the cause of this confusion? Where does it originate? Who is accountable to God? In my humble judgment, the difficulty lies in this: A great many people read the Bible; very few people study it. A great many read it for present or temporary benefit; very few read it in order to "keep in memory" that which it contains. A great many people receive it as a "tale that is told;" very few meditate upon its teaching day and night. A great many scholars and critics strive to interpret the Bible; very few, alas! how few, permit it to interpret itself. The advocates of denominational Christianity attempt to sectarianize it or bend it to their way of thinking, and very few of them are ready and willing to acknowledge the supremacy of divine truth in all things, or bend their systems, their creeds, to its demands. Large numbers of professing Christians declare their allegiance to it, yet deny it by their works. Thus the Bible is murdered, traduced, destroyed in the house of its friends.

Does the Bible interpret itself, explain itself, or submit a harmonious or coherent system of doctrine or teaching? If not, it is impossible for all men to understand it alike. Can we learn what to do in order to the forgiveness of

sins under the reign of Christ, away back in the visions, voices and revelations intended only for patriarchal times? If so, why did the Lord burden the world with sixty-six books, when our duty is clearly revealed in the book of Genesis? If we can learn what to do to be saved in the Old Testament, we have no special use for the New Testament. Of this there can be no doubt. Where did the plan of salvation originate? In the love or mind of God. The Bible is the revelation of this plan, and it contains sixty-six chapters, or books; Genesis is the first, the Revelation is the last. The Bible takes hold of its Author, and extends from the dawn of history to the end of time. Exodus throws more light upon the unfolding purpose of God than Genesis, and Leviticus throws more light upon it than Exodus; in other words, each book interprets or explains the one or all that precede it. Genesis contains the first intimation of the purpose of God in the redemption of men, and it broadens with each successive chapter or book until we reach the law and the Levitical priesthood, the cross of Christ, the twelve apostles, the great commission, the gospel in its fullness, the Church of Jesus Christ, the epistolary writings; and at last the Revelation of Jesus Christ, lifts us into the everlasting city of God. Genesis begins with man in darkness; the promise, like the stars of heaven, shined far away; the law of Moses, like the moon, shadowy, imperfect, prophetic; the gospel the glory of the "Sun of righteousness" (Mal. iv. 21); the home of the people of God, where they need no light of the sun nor of the moon, for the glory of God will lighten it and the Lamb will be the light thereof (Rev. xxi. 23). The unfolding of the plan and the intellectual development of the people proceeded together, and

each period of development was the product of everything before it. You may investigate it from Genesis forward, or from the Revelation backward, and in either case you can not fail to discover that the cross of Christ is the foundation of the world's hope. You may begin with the source of the stream and follow it on until your frail bark floats out into a boundless and fathomless ocean. This is what every earnest and devoted Bible student is able to do. Genesis is the beginning of the stream, and the Revelation and beyond it is the ocean.

We ought—it is a duty that can not be compromised or neglected—to read the Bible in order to understand it; in order to "be ready always to give an answer," a Bible answer, "to every man that asketh a reason of the hope that is in us" (I. Pet. iii. 15). How can we do this? How can the preachers do it? The first requirement is study. What must we study? The word of God. What for? In order that we may be able to divide it, rightly divide it. Why is it necessary to divide the word of truth? In order that we may apply it to that for which it was intended, that we may be successful workmen in the vineyard of the Lord. If the preacher enjoys a direct call, and a special qualification for his work, study is absolutely unnecessary. If the Christian enjoys direct and indisputable evidence of his acceptance with God, it is a waste of time to study a book that affirms that it contains the revelation of the truth. We can not learn anything concerning God, salvation or heaven, outside of the Bible; hence Paul wrote to Timothy: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to

faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (II. Tim. ii. 2).

How must I proceed that the Bible may interpret or unfold itself to my mind? A few examples will be enough to convince the most incredulous. When God passed sentence upon the devil for the part he performed in the transgression, He said: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. iii. 15). What does this mean? What does it imply? What does it include? What does it suggest? "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. ii. 14). "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (I. John iii. 8). When God called Abram out of his country he gave him the promise of another country, the land of Canaan, and also a promise for the world. "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. xii. 3). This promise was renewed to him when he offered his son (Gen. xxii. 18). Also to Isaac (Gen. xxvi. 3–5), and to Jacob (Gen. xxviii. 10–15). What does it mean? Who is Abraham's seed? Does the Bible explain this promise? "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ" (Gal. iii. 16). Just before the death of the patriarch Jacob in the land of Egypt, he called his sons around him and blessed them. When he came to Judah he said: "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from be-

tween his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen. xlix. 10). Who is Shiloh? "For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda" (Heb. vii. 14). "The Lion of the tribe of Juda, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof" (Rev. v. 5). "For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, besides thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him" (Isaiah lxiv. 4). What does this passage mean? Does it refer to the eternal state, to heaven? "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (I. Cor. ii. 9, 10). These things were not known in the olden times, but they are fully revealed under the reign of Jesus Christ. "So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. x. 17). What is faith? Taking God at his word (Rom. iv. 21). On what does it rest? "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I. Cor. iii. 11). "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke xiii. 3). What is repentance? What produces it? "Cease to do evil; learn to do well" (Isaiah i. 16, 17). "Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation" (II. Cor. vii. 10). "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. x. 32). How is this confession made? What produces in the human heart a willingness to make this confession? Where must it be made? "That if thou shalt

confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. x. 9, 10). "A good profession before many witnesses" (I. Tim. vi. 12). "Baptizing them" (Matt. xxviii. 19). How many baptisms does the Bible demand? "One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. iv. 5). What is the action? "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God who hath raised him from the dead" (Col. ii. 12). What is it for? The remission of sins and to bring us into Christ (Acts ii. 38; Gal. iii. 27). The Bible answers every question fully, clearly, pointedly, that you can ask. In other words, the Bible is the only book in the world that ever did or ever will interpret the Bible. The church in reference to this proposition ought to be transformed into one great interrogation point. It is our duty to ask. It is the province of the Bible to answer.

In order to appreciate these things it is necessary to divide the word of truth, to see that the Bible is a harmonious and consistent book. When you open the Bible and find a book named Deuteronomy or Romans, you have a right to inquire: When was this book written? Who wrote it? Why was it written? For whom was it written? Was it intended for the Patriarchal age, the Jewish age, or the Christian age? Was it addressed to a patriarch, a Jew, or Christian? Is it addressed to the unconverted or the converted?

The Bible naturally divides itself into two distinct

parts, the Old Testament and the New Testament. What is the difference between them? Is the New Testament a continuation of the Old Testament, or is it a new and separate institution? A scriptural answer to these questions will help us to reach satisfactory conclusions in reference to our duty under the mediation of Christ and the authority of the apostles. Both Testaments came by divine authority, and one is just as perfect as the other for the accomplishment of the purposes of the Lord. The moon is as perfect as the sun, yet it can not be denied that the sun is the source of light and heat. The Old Testament was limited in its application. It was intended for only a very small part of the world, Abraham and his descendants. If you will read the seventeenth chapter of Genesis, you will find a full description of the covenant and the people who were to receive and enjoy its blessings. Two classes of people were to participate in its privileges and honors: (1) those who were born in Abraham's house; (2) those who were bought with his money. You can not claim membership under either of these provisions; hence you can never become a member of the Abrahamic covenant. This institution was not developed until the days of Moses. Indeed, it extended from the promise made to Abraham unto the death of Christ. You have observed that God gave him two promises (Gen. xii. 1–4). The development and fulfillment of the first included the Jews as a nation, the Levitical priesthood, and the most remarkable people in the world. The unfolding and accomplishment of the second embraces the gospel of Jesus Christ, or the good news of God manifested to all the world. The development of the first promise belonged to the administration of the law of Moses. The devel-

opment of the second was "through the blood of the everlasting covenant;" in other words, the New Testament dedicated or sealed by the blood of Christ (Heb. ix. 12). The old covenant was intended for one nation, the Jews (Gen. xvii. 13); the new covenant is intended for all nations and all ages (Matt. xxviii. 18–20). The old covenant was dedicated by the blood of animals (Heb. ix. 19); the gospel is sanctified by the "precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (I. Pet. i. 19). The old covenant was administered by a priesthood composed of frail men (Heb. vii. 11); the new covenant is administered by the everlasting priest, Jesus the Christ (Heb. vii. 28). The old covenant sacrifices were offered "year by year continually" (Heb. x. 1); the new covenant sacrifice was offered when Jesus gave himself "a ransom for all" (I. Tim. ii. 6). "Circumcision in the flesh made by hands" (Eph. ii. 11), was the distinctive feature of the first covenant; circumcision of the heart and character are distinctive features of the second covenant (Rom. ii. 29; Col. ii. 11). I have affirmed that the Bible answers all legitimate questions concerning our deliverance from the thraldom of sin. It is the word of God. It separates God's method of revealing Himself into the two Testaments, and you can not confound them unless you do it at your peril. It is a dangerous thing to interfere with the book of God, or to mix things which He has made distinct.

Looking backward to that which was accomplished through the old covenant, or the law of Moses, the apostle Paul, with the gospel in his heart and the light of heaven shining around his path, made a number of declarations concerning the first covenant that ought to

attract the attention of every man who desires to be saved. (1) The law was only a shadow of good things to come. "Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount" (Heb. viii. 5). (2) It could not produce righteousness. "I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (Gal. ii. 21). (3) It could not produce perfection. "For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God" (Heb. vii. 19). (4) It could not produce life. "Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law" (Gal. iii. 21). (5) It could not give a good conscience. "Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience" (Heb. ix. 9). (6) It could not justify the people. "By him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts xiii. 39). (7) The law was ended when Christ died upon the cross. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. x. 4). (8) It is abolished or done away. "But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance: which glory was to be done away; how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glori-

ous? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away is glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious" (II. Cor. iii. 7-11). (9). It has been taken away. "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second" (Heb. x. 9). (10) It was fulfilled by Jesus Christ. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill" (Matt. v. 17). (11) It was nailed to the cross. "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Col. ii. 14). (12). We are not under the law. "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. vi. 14). You can not seek for or obtain pardon under the law, for it is abolished. Therefore, in your attempts to divide the word of truth, to learn the way of salvation, you should make a careful discrimination between the law of Moses and the gospel of Christ.

What is the New Testament or Covenant? Where did it begin? When did it begin? What does it embrace? The Bible answers: "For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of

Israel after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws into their mind and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old, is ready to vanish away" (Jer. xxxi. 31–34; Heb. viii. 8–13). This is a significant passage. Observe (1) that God found fault with the old covenant. (2) He declared that he would make another. (3) That it was to be unlike the old one. (4) That he would write his law in the minds and hearts of the people, and not upon tables of stone. (5) That all should know the Lord, from the least unto the greatest. (6) That sins would be forgiven, and therfore remembered no more. (7) The first covenent waxed old and passed away. If there is a doubt lingering in your mind in reference to the new covenant, this plain and comprehensive statement ought to destroy it forever: "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises" (Heb. viii. 6).

Jesus Christ is the testator of the New Testament, the apostles are the witnesses, and the patrimony is eternal life. "For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth" (Heb. ix. 16, 17). A testament is no more nor less than a will.

The New Testament is the will of Christ. No will or testament can be enforced before the death of the testator. Therefore, the New Testament was not enforced during the natural life of Jesus. The cross of Jesus is the dividing line. The law of Moses was in full force until "the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom" (Mark xv. 38). Jesus Christ observed the law and commanded his disciples to do likewise (Matt. xxiii. 1–3). During the three years of his ministry he was submitting the principles of his will to his chosen witnesses. When he died on the cross, he sealed forever the lessons that he taught them. When did they bear witness to his life, works and words? Not until the day of Pentecost. It was impossible for them to begin before that time. The law began at Mount Sinai, and the gospel in the city of Jerusalem after Jesus went up on high (Isaiah ii. 2, 3).

The gospel of Christ is deeper, more positive and more extensive in its demands than the law of Moses was. Do you ask for the proof? Here it is. The law of Moses said: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain" (Ex. xx. 7). The New Testament says: "Let your communications be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil" (Matt. v. 37). The law of Moses said: "Thou shalt not kill" (Ex. xx. 13). The New Testament says: "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" (I. John iii. 15). The law of Moses said: "Thou shalt not steal" (Ex. xx. 15). The New Testament says: "Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Eph. iv.

28). The law of Moses said: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor" (Ex. xx. 16). The New Testament says: "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Eph. iv. 15). The law of Moses said: "Thou shalt not covet" (Ex. xx. 17). The New Testament says: "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. xiii. 10).

The Old Testament stands as a witness to the New. "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference" (Rom. iii. 21, 22). The lessons of the Old Testament were written for our learning. "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Rom. xv. 4). We read the Old Testament because it bears witness to the gospel; but the terms of salvation to us, to the world, can only be found in the New Testament.

What does the New Testament contain? It divides itself into five departments. (1) Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. (2) The Acts of the Apostles. (3) Romans, I. and II. Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I. and II. Thessalonians, Philemon, Hebrews, James, I. and II. Peter, I., II. and III. John, and Jude. (4) I. and II. Timothy, and Titus. (5) Revelation. The first division presents Jesus Christ as the Saviour of men. The second embraces the plan of salvation promulgated by the apostles. The third is addressed to the Church. The fourth is addressed to the

Preachers. The fifth is a book of Prophecy. The first division tells us what to believe; the second tells us what to do in order to be saved from past sins; the epistles teach us how to maintain our Christian character; and the Revelation lifts us to Pisgah's heights and gives us a glimpse of the eternal home to which we are hastening.

When we learn to "divide the word of truth," and become willing to preach the gospel to please God and save men, the world will be brought to Christ; but not before. The world demands truth, and it can not be satisfied with less. God commands us to preach the whole truth, and we can not be saved if we refuse. Why do men misinterpret the teaching of the Bible? Because they are married to human systems that must be maintained, truth or no truth, obedience or no obedience. Why do men neglect the teaching of the apostles, and base their hope for salvation upon the fact that the dying thief received the blessing of Jesus before the New Testament was sealed by the death of the Testator? Because they would rather be saved like a thief than submit to such a humiliation as the "obedience of faith" demands! Why do men apply the promises of Jesus to the apostles concerning the baptism of the Holy Spirit to the wicked world? Because this is the only way in which they can apparently rule out baptism for the remission of sins. Why do men turn to the letters to the Church to find the plan of salvation for persons who have never received Christ? Because they either do not know the truth, or they are not willing to obey it. Why do men claim that God sends them a direct assurance of salvation when they have never obeyed the gospel? Because they are ignorant of the preaching of the

apostles. What is the cause of this confusion, sectarianism and doubting? Unwillingness on the part of the people to receive and obey the truth. The responsibility lies at your door and mine. Will you do your part toward the enlightenment of the world? Will you begin now?

SERMON II.

THE REVELATION OF GOD.

TEXT: "All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (Matt. xi. 27).

What is the Bible? It is an aggregation of sixty-six books written by thirty-six men under the inspiration of God in the different ages of the world. Undoubtedly, but the definition excepting the part that refers to the divine guidance of those who wrote it includes only the visable, the material, the mechanical. Shall we try again? It is the revelation of the will of God. A moment's reflection will convince you that this is also unsatisfactory. Human sin, weakness and suffering demand something more than the enactment of law by a power that is immeasurably beyond our reach. How will this do? It is the revelation of the plan of salvation. This comes nearer to our wants, but our burdened hearts, our clouded minds, and our uncertain steps ask for more than the submission of a plan to save us. Does this definition satisfy the wants of your nature? It is the revelation of the love of God. This approaches nearer to the great throbbing, moving, dying mass of humanity, but the Bible contains more, infinitely more than this. It is the revelation of God himself. His personality, eternal existence, wisdom, power and good-

ness, are the inspiration, life and perpetuity of this wonderful book.

Lying back of the divinity and perpetuity of the Bible is the existence of God. Lying back of the revealed will of God is the Creator himself, who does not leave his children without assistance even when they deserve nothing at his hands. Lying back of the scheme of redemption is the infinite mind that devised it. Lying back of the fact that God has revealed his love to man in numberless ways is God, who is love itself (I. John iv. 8). When you study the Bible do you not ask who is behind it, above it, around it, underneath it, within it? Does not your mind, your faith, your spiritual vision identify it with its Author and therefore establish a living, a perpetual and unchangeable relation between the existence of God and the wants of man? If you read the Bible, considering it nothing more than a law book, a book of poetry, a book of history or a book of wonders, you rob it of its life and much of its glory and power. When I examine a book of common legislative enactments my first inquiry is not: What does it contain, what does it protect or prohibit, but: what power or government lies behind it, and can it maintain and execute its laws? When I read a poetical work I ask: Who wrote this, when and where did he live, and what kind of a man was he? When I read the Bible I ask: Who is the author of this book, where does he live, why did he write it? A government that does not reveal its dignity and power through its laws, is absolutely unworthy of the name. A poetical work that does not in some degree reveal the life and personality of its author, will never attract the attention or excite the admiration of the world. A government, whether

good or bad, flows out into its laws. The poet's heart, whether pure or impure; his life, whether consistent or contradictory, and his individuality, whether ordinary or extraordinary, flows out into his production. The power and glory, the presence and purity, and the love and sympathy of God light up every thought in the Bible. The law directs attention to the government behind it. The poem directs attention to the poet. The Bible directs attention to the one true and living God. The law is a part of the government. The poem is a part of the poet. The Bible is a part of the Lord. The law is the revelation of the government. The poem is the revelation of the poet. The Bible is the Revelation of the Lord. The law is the visible manifestation of the government. The poem is the visible manifestation of the poet. The Bible is the visible manifestation of God. The law is a living reality, for the power of the government flows into every fibre of its body. The poem is a living reality, for it is the product of an individual life. The Bible is a living reality, for it is the product of the divine and eternal life. It is impossible to separate the government and its laws; the poet and his productions, or the Bible and the Lord. When you insult the laws you insult the government, for they are one. When you abuse the poem you offend the poet, for they are inseparable. When you neglect, misuse or insult the Bible, you insult Him whose life is the life of His word.

The Bible, not the paper, the printing or the binding, for they change constantly, but the thoughts, the information, the wisdom it contains, is the revelation of God to man. We can form an estimate of a government through its laws, but in no other way. We can

become acquainted with a poet through his works, but by no other means. We can understand and see the one true and living God through the Bible, but in no other place. Do you study, honor and obey the Bible? Of course you do not. Why not? Because you do not like to be brought face to face with God. If you read it and love it, you certainly love God; but if you neglect it, disregard it, or depend upon some other source for information, you are yet in your sins! The supposed distance between God and His word is purely imaginary; worse than this, it is the invention of the devil! and the prayer in which he is besought, urged, begged to accompany His word "with power," is the offspring of the most abominable ignorance, for the word of God is the revelation of God, and therefore the power of God! When I write a letter to a friend, is it necessary for me to accompany it with my spirit or some additional power in order to make it effectual, to enable him to understand and appreciate it? No. Why not? Because I am in it, my mind is in it, my spirit is in it, my love is in it, my wisdom is in it, my knowledge is in it, my friendship is in it, my sympathy is in it, my individuality is in it; all I am or can be is in it. I pour my sympathy and love into my thoughts, and he can not doubt what I say unless he doubts my friendship or truthfulness. If I am not in my word, there is nothing in it. Is God in the Bible? If He is, it contains all power, and no outside demonstration is necessary to drive it home to the mark. If He is not in it, it is not His word, and no power, human or divine, can make it so. The Bible is true, all true. It is the word of God. He is in it, the Christ is in it, the Holy Spirit is in it, or it does not

contain a word of truth from Genesis to the amen of the Revelation.

Why do you read the Bible? For its poetry, its history, its law? Do you read it expecting that God will impart His Spirit to make it true, and to enable you to understand it? If so, you read it like an infidel, for he does not believe that God is in it; and if He is not as you seem to think, if the Holy Spirit is not it until He imparts additional power, it is devoid of inherent truth, and is no more the revelation of God than the productions of men. Is the Bible as it is the word of God? If not, it is not worthy of our time and attention. Why are the thoughts, the works, the productions of men insufficient to save us? Because they are only the achievements of human minds; and the deepest philosophy, the grandest poetry, or the most beautiful system of religion, that bears only the impress of human intellect, can never lift us higher or make us better than the mind from which it originates. Why, therefore, do we consider the Bible such an important book? Because it presents to us the thoughts of the mind of God, and proposes to lift us up to Him. How many of you really and unqualifiedly believe that the Bible is the word of God, the revelation of God? How many of you are willing to receive it as a message from Him, as a perfect and beautiful portraiture of the divine mind? How many of you read it simply as a law book, and not the bright and smiling face of the loving Father? How many of you are willing and ready to lay it aside for the mysterious, the speculative, the uncertain? O for a deeper, stronger and more abiding confidence in the living word of the living God!

The will of God is not the expression of despotic

power, but the revelation of a Being of infinite power, wisdom and goodness. The plan of salvation is not only the revelation of a nicely constructed system, but the manifestation of a Father of boundless sympathy, love and mercy; the adaptation of God to the wants and to the understanding of men. As the sun bursts in glorious splendor through the rifted clouds and fills the world with light, so God, yes God! shines through the Bible, his own word, "to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (II. Cor. iv. 6). I have affirmed that it is impossible to separate God and the Bible; that you can not accept one and reject the other, or reject one and honor the other. Dou you ask for proof? To the proof let us turn: The nations that are destitute of the Bible worship many Gods. They are without hope and without God in the world (Eph ii. 12).

The Grecians were among the enlightened nations of the past. They were wise in philosophy, government, oratory. Yet it is said that they worshiped many thousand gods. The Jews had "the oracles of God" (Rom. iii. 2), and they, therefore, worshiped the one true and living God. What made the difference in these two nations? One had the revelation of God, the other did not. Remove from the Bible the revelation of God, and what will remain? Nothing but the material on which it is printed. What power could induce you to accept the framework, the system presented in the Bible, if the presence of God did not warm the thoughts, the facts, the commands, the laws, the promises into a living, perpetual reality? If God is revealed in the truth, if His presence keeps it alive, does not God "work in us" (Eph. i. 18–23), if His thoughts turn our

thoughts heavenward (Isaiah lv. 7–9; II. Cor. x. 4, 5); if His facts or truths unlock our understanding (Luke xxiv. 45); if His commandments conquer our stubborn resistance (I. Pet. i. 22); or His promises lift us into a higher life (II. Pet. i. 4)? It seems to me, that people who appeal from the Bible and ask for the knowledge of salvation from heaven, are not only guilty of insulting the revelation that God has made of Himself, but of treason of the blackest form against the very foundations of His government.

Do you ask, what I mean by the assertion that God reveals Himself to man through the Bible? I will endeavor to enlarge the thought, and make it plain even to the most careless observer. Does it reveal His person, or His attributes? Both. Is He capable of sympathizing with the suffering sons of men? The Bible answers: "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him" (Ps. ciii. 13). Is He a Father? The Bible answers: "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. v. 45). Is He strong and wise? The Bible answers: "Behold God is mighty and dispiseth not any; he is mighty in strength and wisdom" (Job xxxvi. 5). His fatherly feeling for His suffering creatures shines through all His ways. His wisdom is proclaimed in every message of the Bible, for no one but the God of truth, knowledge and wisdom could have arranged such a plan as it unfolds. Do you say, the Bible is the work of man? If so, its author is great enough to be a God! The Bible reveals the God of infinite power; of inexhaustible wisdom; of unceasing goodness. Man is limited in power;

circumscribed by mental and physical frailties; full of imperfections. Could he invent such a God as the Bible makes known? The God of the Bible knows all things, and therefore makes no mistakes. Man does not know anything; there is a mystery deep, dark, unfathomable and eternal behind everything he professes to know. Could he imagine a God who comprehends all mystery; to whom darkness is as bright as the day? Nay, verily! If man were perfect, he could of his own power imagine or invent a perfect ideal, and if one man had written the whole of the Bible, our minds might grasp the idea that he originated it; but when we reflect that it was written by thirty-six men, during a period of sixteen hundred years, and that it harmonizes in all its parts; and when we further reflect that they lived in different ages, surrounded by different circumstances, we are driven to the irresistible conclusion that it is not the work of man, unassisted by the Lord. All history sustains these declarations, for the gods of men are nothing more than the offspring of a sinful heart and a clouded imagination. You may aggregate the gods of the heathens of all ages and countries, and combine all that is attributed to each into one grand ideal, and he will be like the source from which he came, impotent, sensual, earthly. It is, therefore, undeniable that the Bible is the revelation of God, of His power, of His wisdom, of His glory, of His presence.

From Adam's transgression downward, man's darkened mind, frail body, and breaking heart cried out after God. Man needs a power above himself; a god he will have. Sin was a dark and stormy gulf, whose waves chanted the notes of despair. On one side, man, sin, suffered and died. On the other, full of love and com-

passion, shined the majesty and glory of God. Man was unable to cross these turbulent waters. God, out of pity and love, would not, for His presence is a "consuming fire" (Heb. xii. 29); and no sinner can see His face and live. Hence, the first revelations of His person were vague, indistinct, and unsatisfactory. In this way he appeared to Jacob (Gen. xxviii. 11–28), and many others who lived in the patriarchal times. Man at the time could not endure more. See the little drop of water resting in the bosom of the ocean wave. God wants it. Does he send an angel to lift it up and help it on in its mission of mercy? No. He sends a golden sun-ray to warm it, to expand it, to spread light through it and, wonder of wonders! it begins to rise. Did God send an angel to lift man up to nobility of character? By no means. He gave him a promise, a vague and imperfect outline of Himself, far away in the dim distance. His heart began to get warm, his mental vision began to brighten, and his aspirations began to grasp after the pure, the good, the everlasting.

Moses saw Him in the burning bush (Ex. iii. 1–6), but this did not satisfy the longings of his mind. It was only a faint reflection of His majasty and power. Hence Moses said: "If I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way." The Lord answered this by promising to be with him and give him rest. This did not meet his wants, for he desired to see God. And he replied: "I beseech thee, shew me thy glory." The Lord answered: "I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.

And the Lord said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: and it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: and I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts; but my face shall not be seen" (Ex. xxxiii. 12–23).

God manifested himself to Israel at the introduction of the law. Did He step down upon the mountain, and show them the brightness of His glory? The record (Ex. xix. 9), says he came down in a thick cloud. Grand, glorious, majestic spectacle! As I look back to the sacred mountain, I see the lightning burst from the awful cloud, and intensify the darkness of the summit of Sinai. I hear the muttering thunders roll, and involuntarily catch the solemnity of the occasion. I behold the sea of upturned terror-stricken faces. The ground trembles under the tread of its mighty Maker, and the people stand in silence while the law is written by the finger of God and handed down to men. The Lord was with them, for it is said that when the tabernacle was completed: "A cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle" (Ex. xl. 34). Indeed, the "lights and perfections" of the entire system were the indications that God was present, to bless them. They were honored above all nations of the ancient times; yet how few of them possessed a clear conception of the love and purity of God. They had law, statutory and ceremonial; law in abundance; but in their imperfect understanding of the truth, much of their work became mechanical, lifeless, unacceptable. True, they saw the glory of God when Sinai's cloud-capped and hoary summit echoed His

mighty footsteps, thundered His existence through every heart, and painted consternation on every face; but this demonstration, awful as it was, did not reveal His love, nor enforce upon them the thought that He is ever present in His word. Few of them felt His presence in after years. Few of them meditated upon His word, until they came so near the gates of eternity, that they could feel the throbbing of His wondrous life. Yet their motive to do good, and to be good, was in the law under which they lived. Their obedience and purity as a nation rose and fell with their appreciation of that fact, that God revealed Himself to them through their law, His law.

The manifestations of God during the patriarchal and Jewish dispensations, were only preparatory to the greater, higher, grander, clearer, fuller manifestations of God under the dispensation of Grace. It was a difficult task for the mind of the uneducated Jews to see a personal, present, and loving Redeemer and Friend in the ten commandments; hence the prophetic part of the system. The tabernacle, the priests, the daily and annual offerings, were shadows; but only shadows of good things to come (Heb. x. 1). The law was addressed to the life; the ten commandments did not touch the heart! but these things were pictures to the mind, to the soul, to the faith. For hundreds of years they sighed, struggled against temptation, and waited for the promised redemption, until eternity gave up its treasures and the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary, a virgin in Israel, and said to her: "Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring

forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke i. 28–35). Joseph, to whom Mary was espoused, was diposed "to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. i. 19–21). An apostle of Jesus Christ gives additional light: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John i. 14). Are these passages mysterious? Are they hard to understand? Let us turn to the New Testament commentary, the words of the apostles of the Lord. They explain and make them clear: "God was manifested in the flesh" (I. Tim. iii. 16). Could anything be plainer than this? But how was God manifested in the flesh? The power of the Highest overshadowed Mary, she conceived, brought forth a son, "the Word was made flesh," and God was with men. When I say, God is manifested in nature, everybody knows what I mean. When I say,

God manifested himself in the destruction of the wicked through the ages past, every mind grasps the thought. When I say, God shines into our hearts through the truth, no thinking man stops to doubt. When I say, God was manifested in the flesh, angels and men stand in awe and wonder. Do you ask for further information? Turn to the word of truth. There is no other place to which we can go.

Do the Scriptures identify him with man? He was born as we are born (Luke ii. 11). He had flesh and blood as we have (Heb. ii. 4). He grew up from childhood to manhood as we do (Luke ii. 40). He labored with his hands as a carpenter (Mark vi. 3). He suffered the pangs of hunger as we do now (Matt. xxi. 18). He became weary, and sat down to rest, as we have all done (John iv. 6). He wept at the grave of a departed friend (John xi. 35). He was patriotic, willing to render to the government its dues (Matt. xxii. 21). He had warm personal friends, as we all delight to have (John xxi. 20). He grieved over the sufferings and sorrows of others (Matt. xxiii. 37). He loved His mother, and made provision for her declining years before he departed from the world (John xix. 26, 27). He died, he passed through the dark valley before us (Rom. vi. 9–10). He was buried in the earth, the common level to which kings and subjects all must come (I. Cor. xv. 4). Jesus Christ had a heart that beat in deepest sympathy with every wail of sin and pain. The character that is given him by the historians justifies the statement that, sin excepted, he was the most intensely human person that ever trod the earth. As a descendant of Abraham, he was a man — yes, a man in every sense of the word. He knew what it was to earn his daily bread, and there-

fore knows the wants of the millions who toil from day to day to maintain their existence. He drank the cup of sorrow to its very dregs, and he knows how to sympathize with us when we pass through the deep waters. Paul, who caught the spirit of His wonderful life, gave expression to the depths of his thought and feeling in these immortal words: "Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high-priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people; for in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted" (Heb. ii. 17, 18).

Was he more than man? Yes, he is the Son of God. More than this, he is the only begotten Son of God. If he were not the Son of God, he was the greatest deceiver that ever lived on earth. Do you ask for the evidences of his divinity? Do you ask if he was the revelation of God to the eyes, the minds, and the hearts of men? His own life and labors must answer. He was begotten of God (John iii. 16). Angels, "a multitude of the heavenly host," sang their glad notes through earth and sky when he was born in the city of Bethlehem (Luke ii. 13). He is the salvation and light of men (Luke ii. 25–32; John i. 4). He was wiser at the age of twelve than the doctors and lawyers of Jerusalem (Luke ii. 46). He was superior to nature (Matt. viii. 26). He became poor in order that others might be rich (II. Cor. 8, 9). You may complain of your poverty, but there is not a poorer man in this congregation, in the world, than Jesus became for you. I believe that I may go a step further and say that the poorest saint is richer than Jesus was. If Jesus had been only a man, would he have done this?

Never. Would you, under the power of his teaching, do this? I doubt it. He knew all things. Even his enemies declared that "Never man spake like this man" (John vii. 46). He had power to lay down his life, and power to take it again (John x. 17). The angels of heaven were ready to come at his command (Matt. xxvi. 53). God acknowledged him as his "beloved Son" at his baptism, and again in the presence of Peter, James and John, when they were together on "the holy mount" (II. Peter i. 16–18). He voluntarily gave up his life for his enemies (Rom. v. 10). This stamped him as Divine. The people despised his mission. They mocked him, derided him, misrepresented him, persecuted him, treated him with scorn, spat upon him, scourged him, betrayed him, denied him; yet in the face of all this unparalleled hatred, he voluntarily and without a murmur gave his life for them. Would a man—would you—do this? All nature put on the garb of woe while he suffered (Luke xxiii. 44). Righteous men have been dying since Abraham, and the sun shined on as before, but it did not look upon the sufferings of the Lord. He was stronger than death or the grave (Rev. i. 18). His word, his salvation, fills every want of every man in every age. He is God with us, the Saviour of the world.

Is this satisfactory? If not, we will pursue the investigation farther. What do you think of the text? Jesus received everything from his Father. Our knowledge of the Father depends upon our knowledge of the Son, and our knowledge of the Son depends upon our knowledge of the Father. In other words, we can only approach the Father as the Son reveals him, and we can not accept one and reject the other. As a Son, Jesus was

the manifestation, revelation or reproduction of the Father. The New Testament sustains this proposition fully and clearly. Each passage comes to us as a revelation of God. I will let Jesus speak for himself: "Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father, that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very work's sake" (John xiv. 8–10). "All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (Matt. xi. 27). "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John i. 18). "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth; and he will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel" (John v. 19, 20). "Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father" (John vi. 46). "As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father" (John x. 15). "He that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me" (John xiii. 20). "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works; that

ye may know and believe that the Father is in me and I in him" (John x. 37–38). "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father" (John xv. 24). "For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us" (I. John i. 2). "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life" (I. John v. 20).

Everything depends upon a clear conception of the person of Jesus Christ. Was he a manifestation of God, or was he the manifestation of God? He was with God "before the world was" (John xvii. 5), and therefore he knew all things. Paul say: "All things were created by him and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Col. i. 16,17). John says: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John i. 1). He further informs us that "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." Is God invisible? "Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God" (Col. vii. 15). Do you find it hard to see God? If so, "look unto Jesus" (Heb. xii. 2). "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. ii. 9). Is God without "parts or passions"? Jesus is "the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person" (Heb. i. 3), and is "in the form of God and equal with God" (Phil. ii. 6). I do not offer any interpretation of these passages; will you receive them as they are? They are undeniably a reflection of what the

apostles believed. I prefer their company to the speculations of men, for we can not go astray if we cling to Jesus and to the testimony of those who were "eye-witnesses of his majesty."

As before proven, God, on the account of our sins, could not approach us in the glory of his person and power; hence, "the Word became flesh," and "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" (I. Cor. v. 19), and sinful humanity could live, think and act in his presence. Suppose Jesus had come to earth as God came down on Mount Sinai, would the world have been attracted to him? Certainly not; for God had said — and his word is irrevocable — that "There shall no man see me and live." Jesus Christ had a human face, but behind that face was the face of God. He had a body like ours, but within that body, human, frail and weak as it was, dwelled the fullness, glory and power of him on whose uncovered face we can not, dare not look. God was just as good, as sympathetic, as merciful, as ready to save, before Jesus came as afterward; but men could not approach near enough to his presence to learn this, hence he approached man by "humbling himself" in a body subject to death like ours. God had saved men in all ages; but Jesus Christ was the Saviour himself. God had manifested his wisdom in all things, but Jesus Christ was wisdom itself. God had manifested his power in creating and preserving the world, but Jesus Christ was, and is, and evermore shall be, the center of all power. God had manifested his goodness to all men, but Jesus Christ was goodness itself. God had manifested his truth, his life, his way, but Jesus Christ was "the way, the truth, and the life" (John xiv. 6). God had manifested his holiness in all his dealings with men, but Jesus

Christ was holiness itself. God had manifested his mercy to the penitent souls of all the ages, but Jesus Christ was mercy itself. God had manifested his sympathy for a world in darkness, in ways past our numbering, but Jesus Christ was sympathy itself. God had manifested his love in all things, but Jesus Christ was "the Son of his love" (Col. i. 13), love itself. Everything that God had revealed in "other ages" (Eph. iii. 5) was exhibited in its fullness, glory and perfection in Jesus Christ. If you have him, it matters not how poor you are, "all things are yours" (I. Cor. iii. 21–23). If you have not, you are a pauper in the sight of heaven (Rev. iii. 17). Jesus Christ came in order to make his Father known, and he revealed, through the medium of a human body, the eternal existence, the unfathomable wisdom, the inexhaustible power, the infinite resources, the universal presence, the unlimited knowledge, the boundless sympathy, the independent personality, the perfect holiness, the continual goodness, the unceasing mercy, and the everlasting love of God. Are you searching after wisdom, power, truth, or salvation? If so, look to Jesus the Emmanuel, the "God with us," for he is the concentration, the embodiment, the perfection, the revelation, the manifestation, the center of everything grand, pure and elevating, both in the human and in the divine. What the Father was, Jesus was; and what they were in ages past, they will be forever. This settles the question of our salvation. God can not save us, he has no plan to save us, outside of the person and power of his Son.

If I could come to you to-day with assurances that you could not doubt, that I had been with God, in his immediate presence, for two hundred years, would you

believe me? You know you would. Jesus was with the Father before the world was. Will you hear him? Do you ask me why he came to earth? To show us the Father; to show us the eternal Spirit through his body of flesh; to reveal the truth, to open the road to heaven. We will sit at his feet and listen as he speaks of the past, the present, and the future. There are no mysteries before his eyes, for he is God in a human body, yet the friend of "publicans and sinners" (Matt. ix. 11). He knew all history, and was therefore a competent witness concerning the teaching of the Old Testament. How the centuries buried under the wrecks of time revive under his mighty touch! The saints of other times become real persons before our enraptured eyes, and the sinners who insulted God and despised the truth send up a wail of despair that ought to be a warning to us all. Whatever uncertainties may have surrounded the history of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Elijah, Jonah, Isaiah and Jeremiah, are forever destroyed by the endorsement of the Son of the Highest, "God with us." The Law, the Prophets and the Psalms received his unqualified endorsement, and the man who believes in him can see the truth of the Old Testament as no unbeliever ever did or ever will see it. You can not accept Jesus and reject Moses. Jesus came from God centuries after Moses died, and as he was present at the creation his endorsement of Moses settles the matter for all time. The question, therefore, is not simply concerning the reliability of Moses, but, Is Jesus Christ the Son of God?

Paul says, "We see Jesus" (Heb. ii. 9). How, where, and when do we see him? As the people saw him while he lived on earth? Certainly not. We can and do believe those who did see him. We see him in

his words, in his miracles, in his love, in his sufferings, in his power. Do you think we could do this without the knowledge of the Bible? When you read or hear the sermon on the mount, do you not see him? When you read the great commission, do you not see him as he commands his apostles to go and teach the nations? He put a spirit and power into the command to go that can never die. What keeps this commission alive? Jesus Christ is in it. Do you deny it? Why does the Bible live? Why is it always new? Why does it seem fresher and newer every day to the patient and earnest student? Why does it outlive all other books? Why does its popularity increase with the years? Why does it occupy a place in the faith and hopes of the world that no other book can approach? Why has it more loving and devoted friends, and more malignant and bitter enemies than any other book? Why is it that no man ever began to doubt when he sat at his mother's knee and listened to the reading of the Bible? Why is it that every man is willing to trust the man who loves and obeys the truth? Why is the man who reads, understands and obeys the Bible more conscientious and more submissive to the ways of Providence than men who do not? The only answer I can give is that the Jesus Christ, the manifestation of God, fills the book, and therefore fills every part of it — every fact, every command, every promise. To my mind, this explains the apostolic declaration, "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. i. 28).

Our minds can grasp a person easier than an abstract truth; hence Jesus is the truth, and when we know him we know the truth, all truth (John viii. 31–36). Why do professing Christians reject the commandments of

Christ? Because of unbelief. They do not see him in his word. Why do men refuse to submit to the terms of pardon, and through them receive the evidence of pardon? Because they refuse to see Jesus in his promises. Why do men appeal to heaven and ask for the Holy Spirit to come and regenerate them? Because they do not believe the apostle when he says the gospel is "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. i. 16). Why are the words of Jesus life? (John vi. 63). Because God is in them, Jesus Christ is in them, the Holy Spirit is in them. Could they contain more? Are not they all power? The "engrafted word" is able to save us (Isa. i. 21), which is another way of saying, God is able to save us, Jesus Christ is able to save us, the Holy Spirit is able to save us, for the word of truth is the revelation of God, of Jesus Christ, of the Holy Spirit. When a man is filled with the truth, God dwells in him (I. Cor. iii. 16), Jesus Christ dwells in him (Col. i. 27), the Holy Spirit dwells in him (Eph. v. 18). If a man rejects the truth, he rejects God, he rejects the Son of God, he rejects the Spirit of God, for the Bible is no less than the revelation of God. No system of theology that rejects the Holy Spirit's mission through the truth can be in harmony with the will of God. A theory that does not exalt the personality of Jesus Christ in our salvation is false and deceptive. We can not approach the Father, excepting through his Son, and we can not approach him excepting through the "obedience of faith," for he is the author of salvation to the obedient (Heb. v. 8, 9), but to no one else. We can not obey him unless we learn his will, and we can not learn his will outside of the Bible. It submits to our consideration the full and perfect revelation of a perfect and everlasting God;

Father, Son and Holy Spirit. You can not find God, the Saviour, or the Holy Spirit, outside of its revelations.

How can I know that I have the Father and the Son, and therefore the Holy Spirit? There is a divine and infallible assurance. "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John xiv. 23). "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and Son" (II. John 9). Here is something we can understand; something on which we can rest. God has but one way of dwelling in us, through the truth, through the "doctrine of Christ."

Do you desire salvation? Do you desire a personal and ever-present Saviour, who knows every hope, every fear and every pain you endure? Jesus Christ came to earth in order that you might be saved; that you might be rich in faith and hope and peace. His way is the way; the only way. Will you receive him? How can you turn away? He calls; calls to-day; calls now. Will you believe him, accept him, serve him, love him all your days? If you will, there is no power in the universe that can shut you out of heaven; and at last on the other shore, in the city of pearly gates and jasper walls, we will unite with the millions of earth who have conquered every foe, in singing all praise "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto our God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever" (Rev. i. 5, 6).

SERMON III.

THE FALL AND RESTORATION.

TEXT: "For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. ii. 17).

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John x. 10).

Genesis means creation, and the book of Genesis contains fifty chapters, but only a small part of it is strictly devoted to an account of creation. The first chapter declares that "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." This is final and reasonable. Scientists have puzzled their brains for generations concerning the origin of the universe, but no solution has ever been proposed that is equal to the declaration that it is the product of an eternal and almighty Intelligence, for this simple statement carries conviction to every honest mind. The Bible account of creation harmonizes with reason and the discoveries of science, and it is therefore the truth. The first three chapters of Genesis tell us of the creation of the man and the woman; of the Garden of Eden; of the temptation and transgression; of the banishment of our ancestors from the garden, and the penalty which their sin inflicted upon them. Moses presents in these chapters a brief view of the formation of natural things; the other and larger part of the Bible is devoted to the development of a scheme of redemption for the race. He introduces us to the Maker of the heavens and the earth; the subsequent revelation pro-

poses to teach us to know him (John xvii. 1-4), and to reunite us to him forever. He gives us glorious views of the wisdom, power and goodness of God; redemption reveals his sympathy, love and mercy. The broken law declares man a sinner; the culmination of the purpose of God in the good news of salvation proclaims Jesus Christ the Saviour. It emphasizes God's hatred of sin; the cross of Christ reveals his love for the sinner. Through it we see dark, evil and threatening clouds settle down upon the pathway of man; the unfolding of the will of God points us to a kingdom where clouds will obscure our vision no more. Man was introduced to the sin-cursed earth as a prisoner of death; dishonored, disherited and undone; the Saviour proclaimed "liberty to the captives" (Isaiah lxi. 1), and "everlasting consolation and good hope through grace" (II. Thess. ii. 16).

Some men are astonished that so small a part of the Bible should be devoted to the mighty works of God in creation; works in which all generations have an increasing interest; but when we reflect that he designed only to say enough about creation to proclaim in plain words his existence and power, all is clear. God did these works in the beginning. How far back into the unnumbered ages this beginning was, we have no means of knowing. This is one of his secrets. He will unfold it at the proper time. If he had described fully, accurately and geographically everything the Bible refers to, we could never read it, and the impossibility of learning our duty would mock our cry for help. We are left to discover the beauty and details of creation for ourselves, knowing that while we dig into the bowels of the earth, sail over the seas, and measure the stars of heaven, there is a living and eternal God behind all things that we see.

The Bible is not given to prove the existence of God, for no one but a fool has ever doubted it (Ps. xiv. 1). It is not necessary to prove that which a man can not disbelieve if he tries. I do not believe there is an accountable being on the face of the earth who does not in the depths of his heart recognize and feel the power of God. His mind may be clouded with superstition, his heart may be hardened by the deceptions of infidelity, but he can not disguise the fact that he originated somewhere; nor can he believe that with his erect frame, his "looks commercing with the skies," and the boundless possibilities of his mind, he was evolved from nothing. My intelligence is an unanswerable argument that my Creator knows more than I do. The stream can not rise higher than the source from which it flows. Nature announces the existence of God; the Bible reveals him to mankind. We behold his presence in the sun, moon and stars, in the capabilities of his creatures; but we read of his willingness and power to save us from our sins, in the Gospel of his Son.

The Bible, embracing the two testaments, contains a great variety of history, but it is not strictly a historical book. It is a book of human redemption, of divine manifestation, of divine law, including enough history to identify it with men, to indicate its two-fold purpose—to reveal God to man, and man to himself. In other words, to teach us how sinful, rebellious and corrupt we are, and how willing God is to purify us and restore us to the dignity of the sons of God, and to peace and happiness. Moses gives an account of the creation of Adam and Eve, a few of the prominent events in their lives, and then passes on to other actors in the drama of sin and suffering. This accounts for many historical obscur-

ities. No man is permitted to occupy space in this book unless his life enforces a principle, unless he sustains a direct relation to God's purpose, the development of the plan of salvation; hence men are frequently introduced, fill their mission and pass into oblivion in a day.

My theme, "The Fall and Restoration of Men," is in some respects a peculiar one. Not that it is a new one, for the phrase, especially the first part of it, is rather a popular one. Nor is the difficulty in the word restoration, for I use it as a synonym for redemption, or salvation. Do you ask where the peculiarity lies? In the simple fact that the first part of my proposition is not only inappropriate, but it is unscriptural. Yes, unscriptural; and even worse, it is absurd. Did man fall? Does the Bible say he fell? Does the Old Testament say he fell? Does the New Testament say he fell? Does Moses say he fell? Does Jesus Christ say he fell? Do the apostles say he fell? No. Then why do you say it? Be honest, now. What do you mean by it? Anything? Did he fall out of heaven? Did he fall out of Eden? Did he fall out, completely out, of the favor of God? He certainly did neither. How did he lose his exalted place in the favor of God? He sinned, he broke the law of God, he disregarded the word of his Maker. Does the Bible teach that he lost the favor of God in the full meaning of the term? Did God refuse to commune with him after he left the garden? If so, where is the proof? If he did, what do we mean by the oft-repeated story of redeeming love (I. John iv. 10)? Either redemption is a farce, or the supposition that God refused to commune with sinful men is a terrible mistake. Do you accept the former? If not, the latter is evidently true. I do not,

I can not, deny that man sinned willfully and voluntarily, nor that he lost an exalted place in the estimation of his Creator, nor that the results of his transgression are too awful for the portrayal of human speech. But I can not let this opportunity pass to assert, with all the earnestness of which I am possessed, that the theory that man lost all by the transgression, is either the offspring of conceited ignorance, or a base and contemptible slander on the care, sympathy and goodness of God! Man sinned, and, to put it in the strongest language possible, lost himself; but he did not lose the love and mercy of God. Did he not show as deep an interest in man, the benighted sinner, as he did in man, the sinless creature? Do you see any such exhibitions in the Garden of Eden as the eye of faith can behold at the grave of Lazarus or upon the cross?

To the enlargement of these thoughts and the outgrowth of the purpose of God in redemption, I shall devote the remainder of this discourse. A brief examination of man's creation will enable us to get hold of the subject at the proper place. First of all, I emphasize the fact, the fundamental fact, that God made him. He was not evolved from nothing. He was not the product of the developments of numberless years. He was not evolved from the lower orders of animal existence, but he was the intelligent offspring of the God of heaven (Acts xvii. 28). Man was the crowning work of creation. It has been said—how truthfully I leave the intelligent student of nature and revelation to judge—that God in creation began furthest from himself, and that he approximated his own majesty and glory when he made man (Gen. i. 27) in his own image. Man is a double, a triuune being—body, spirit, soul. His body was

made of the dust. His spirit came from God. His soul, or life, was the result of the union of body and spirit. His body was perfect, full-grown, and his mind was perfect in its possibilities. He came from the hands of God into the enjoyment of physical and intellectual manhood. He was given a capacity to listen to argument, to examine facts, and to reason concerning what he heard. It is impossible to lay too much stress upon the fact that man, like his Maker, is a thinking being; indeed, it is said that the name man derives its significance from this fact. The theory of mental or spiritual influence that does not harmonize with this is contrary to the constitution of man, at war with reason, and absurd in the extreme.

Primeval earth—earth without a curse upon it, fresh from the hands of the Creator, while the morning stars still sang together, and the sons of God still shouted for joy—was not in the estimation of God a fit place for man to dwell. Hence the planting of the garden. It was the Father's special care. He planted it. What care! What an exhibition of kindness and thoughtfulness for man's comfort and happiness! A tree that could satisfy every wish that man could frame was within his reach. When you think of all the fruit-bearing and "every tree that is pleasant to the sight" (Gen. ii. 9) in all the zones of earth, you have some idea of the beauty, the loveliness, the munificence of the Garden of Eden. The tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, grew there. Adam was put into the garden to "dress and keep it." Do you ask how long he was there? I do not know, neither does any other man. This is not our business. We are concerned about wha he did and what he lost. God gave him a law. It

was clear, comprehensive and adapted to his understanding. "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest eat freely; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. ii. 16, 17). Do you see anything wrong about this? Anything contrary to man's constitution? Nothing; manifestly nothing. He had liberty enough, and every blessing body or mind could ask. His birthright was freedom and happiness. Could he reasonably ask for more? Could you, if you were in his place?

The law God imposed was strictly prohibitory: "Thou shalt not touch it, thou shalt not eat it" (Gen. iii. 3). Do you see anything mysterious about it? Nothing whatever. Does it contain anything abstruse or unintelligible? No, it is like all the laws of God; was expressed in such plain words that pleading ignorance as an excuse for its infraction was simply out of the question. The Lord in the Garden of Eden established a precedent which he has respected, and to which he strictly adhered during all the ages. He addressed the mind, the heart, the understanding, through the organ of hearing. He spoke in language which could be easily and readily understood. He did not "move upon" (Gen. i. 2) the minds of his intelligent offspring by the Spirit, as he did upon the chaotic mass out of which he made the earth. This was force pure and simple; but he spoke to them, talked with them, commanded them, and their ears discerned the sounds, their minds comprehended the words and caught and retained the thoughts. This enabled them to reason, to think and act intelligently. With the exception of those who were inspired

instruments in the hands of God for the perfection of his plan (II. Pet. i. 19) there never has been any deviation from this principle. God inspired the prophets and apostles to speak (I. Pet. i. 11, 12) to proclaim the truth, but the only inspiration we have to do the will of God comes through the will of God itself. Can you think of a passage that contradicts these statements? Where is it? I have asserted that God gave man the power to reason; planted it so deeply in his constitution that whatever is unreasonable is contrary to his constitution. Let us take this proposition and the theory of "direct spiritual influence in order to conversion," and put them to the test. Will the theory harmonize with our inherent, unchangeable and constitutional privilege to reason before we act? Suppose the Lord sends the Holy Spirit, with the immeasurable rapidity of the lightning's flash, and converts men "in the twinkling of an eye," as many believe, would this give a man any time to reason? Can you see anything here on which the mind can reason, on which the faith can rest? God made man free to think and act. If he sends a direct regenerating power, man does not act; he becomes a machine and moves only when "the power" is exerted upon him. Is religion, therefore, the co-operation of the human and the divine? It is entirely the result of irresistible and omnipotent power. God treated our fore-parents before and after the transgression in harmony with their mind, their volition. All law, human and divine, is directed at the life, but through the mind. Would God create man and give him a mind and deny him the privilege of using it by treating him as a mere machine, compelled to move when the power is applied whether he is willing or not? Does he refuse to recognize his own creative acts?

We will do well to make a careful, marked and continual discrimination between God's method in creating the world and his method of dealing with men. It can not and will not be denied that God's Spirit is the agent in both departments of work. Does God exert his power, upon matter, unthinking matter, and man, thinking man, in the same way? Did you ever think of this before? What holds the worlds around above us into one grand system? The power of God. How does he exert this power? By persuasion, by sending a message of love to the planets as they shine, by saying to them, "Come and let us reason together" (Isaiah i. 18)? Nothing could be more absurd. How is it done? By force, just as the Spirit moved upon the dark void and brought order out of it at the beginning. How does God exert his power upon man in order to convert him? Just as he did to make him, as he made and governs the universe? No, indeed. The theory of spiritual agency to which I have referred proposes to place man in the domain of force, and, instead of putting a motive in his heart by giving him something to think about, by putting a promise before him, perform a miracle upon him to make him a Christian and thereby nullify every law constitutional and revealed. Keep these two principles before you, force in creation and motive power, or persuasion in the enlightenment and redemption of men; but be careful to keep them apart; it is dangerous to confound them. To my mind it is inexpressibly foolish to pray to God to send converting power down. Is there any motive power or persuasion in the modern system of conversion? If so, where is it? God uses persuasion to save; force to punish. Adam and Eve were driven from the garden; the antediluvians perished

in the flood; the walls of Jericho fell by force. It is only when man gets beyond the reach of reason, or persuasion that God uses force upon him, and when he does this, all opportunity to be saved is past.

I think the law that was given in the garden was sufficiently clear for the purpose for which it was given; the prohibition of wrong, the encouragement of obedience. Indeed, God could not have consistently added a penalty if the law had been beyond the comprehension of man. The existence of such a penalty pre-supposes that the law could be understood, and that there was no feasible ground for a mistake concerning its scope, or for a misconception of its meaning. This is true of all law enacted by divine authority. Man's condition—mental, spiritual and political—is considered, and the law is framed to meet his wants. Hence the penalty is not an injustice, not an expression of tyranny; but a reasonable necessity. There never has been any need of performing a miracle on the law to make it plain, or upon the people to enable them to understand it. God knows man's condition, for he made him. The law is therefore perfect in its adaptation to his wants. This was true in the garden. It was true under the law of Moses. It is true under the gospel of Christ (Jer. xxxi. 31–34) and will be true until the end of the world (Matt. xxviii. 16, 20).

A law without a penalty is a dead letter. The penalty to the first law was brief and to the point: "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Misunderstanding this penalty men have fallen into grievous errors. What did the Lord mean, natural death? If so, why did man live after he sinned? This question, which every thinking man propounds to himself, has led many theologians to the conclusion that he meaut "spiritual

death." What do you mean by this expression? Do you think the spirit really dies? Can you find it in the Bible? If you can not you do wrong in using it. There are only two deaths in the absolute meaning of the term: the death of the body and the death of the whole man, body, soul, spirit; in other words, "the second death" (Rev. xx. 14). Is a man ever dead until "the pitcher is broken at the fountain," until the spirit departs from the body? Is a man dead, as implied in the phrase, "the second death," until he has passed beyond the judgment, beyond the reach of truth, beyond the love of God exhibited in the gospel, beyond hope? A man may be physically incapacitated for the performance of labor or the enjoyment of happiness, and in a certain sense be dead. So may a man be deficient in will power through long and continued indulgence in sin; weak in faith through the corrupting influence of vice; nearly devoid of love and gratitude through the reign of covetousness in his heart; unable, without the power of the truth, to do the will of God; in short, "dead in tresspasses and in sins" (Eph. ii. 1); but the second death, in its full and awful meaning, lies beyond time. What did the Lord mean by death in this passage; the death of the body, the second death, or both? In my judgment, and I think the Scriptures sustain me in it, he meant both. Let us enter into a careful examination of this passage, the language particularly. When he placed the man and the woman in the garden he said, according to the marginal reading, according to the literal meaning of the Hebrew which Moses wrote: "Eating thou shalt eat." Do you think there is anything peculiar about this? I do. Do you ask what it is? Suppose I take you to my garden or orchard, give it to you for a home, put you into it and

say to you: "Eating thou shalt eat." What would you understand by this permission? That you were to eat enough to satisfy present wants, and stop? You would certainly decide that my words meant: You may eat, you may begin now, you may continue indefinitely. The penalty, according to the same authority, assumes precisely the same form: "Dying thou shalt die." I think this means: If you violate my law you shall be exposed to death; you shall become the victim of sorrow, pain and disappointment; you shall be driven away from the tree of life, and your body shall return to the dust from which it came (Gen. iii. 19), and inasmuch as sin shall bind you as a chain you shall be exposed to the second death, which is eternal. This view is sustained by the actual results of the transgression. His body lived and his spirit lived, although subject to death and contaminated by sin. If this is not its meaning, where is one that will harmonize with all the facts in the case and the subsequent revelations of the Bible? Let those who are able answer, for I frankly admit that I can not.

These suggestions and explanations bring us to the consideration of the two great facts in the history of man: The departure and the return to God. I think we have lost much in our battles with error by our unscriptural methods of speaking. I think we have lost much by constantly ringing the changes on the fall. Why not come down to pure and unadulterated facts, and say he sinned, violated the law? I object to this term because it makes an erroneous impression. If a man were standing on a platform fourteen steps above the ground, he could only get down by a sudden fall, or by descending step by step. If he is on the ground he can only reach the elevation by ascending step by step, or by the work of an

almighty power that simply grasps him and elevates him to the desired place. If man fell, as most people suppose, it is natural to presume that he must be restored by the work of naked omnipotence, without consulting his mind or his wishes. If, by the assistance of the devil, he went down step by step until he reached the deepest depths of sin, it is logical to conclude that by the assistance of Jesus Christ he may ascend, step by step, until he reaches the highest heights of "glory, honor, immortality and eternal life" (Rom. ii. 5). I emphatically and unreservedly affirm that man did not fall; he sinned. When I hear men say that he fell, I am led to think that he was so maimed, and bruised, and disabled, there was nothing left of him but filth, sin and degradation. It is taught in the creeds and proclaimed from the pulpits that he lost all ability of will and became wholly inclined to evil. Do the facts recorded by Moses justify such conclusions? I think not. We demand facts. There is too much assertion without proof. The world has been burdened with dogmatic declarations long enough. Again I ask, do the facts justify the conclusion that Adam and Eve fell, in the popular acceptation of the term? Did they fall out of a perfect manhood and womanhood into a state of absolute barbarism? Did they become heathens or savages by breaking the law? Were they greater sinners, heathens, savages or barbarians than your children are when they pass the line of accountability and violate the law of God? Were they any less the objects of the Father's love than the thousands of sinners who disobey him every day?

I have already stated that it is more scriptural, more reasonable, more in harmony with common sense, to say man sinned than to say he fell. I think you accept this

conclusion. There is another phase of the subject that we can not afford to neglect. It is claimed that all men fell in Adam; that as he was the father of all mankind all men sinned in him, and that we, therefore, inherit sin from our ancestors, and that we are sinners from birth. This being true, I am to answer for what I inherit without any desire, will or volition of my own, as well as for my own acts. Can this be true? If you can believe that you are accountable for the violation of a law that was given and broken six thousand years before your life began, you have credulity enough to believe anything, and it seems to me you might use your power in believing some parts of the New Testament that you have heretofore neglected, such as burial is baptism, Christian unity, or the power of truth. What is sin? The answer to this question ought to settle the matter. "Sin is the transgression of the law" (I. John iii. 4). This rule has never had an exception in the history of the world. Adam sinned when he broke the law that God gave him. The Jews sinned when they violated the law of Moses. We sin when we refuse to hear the voice of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ (Heb. xii. 25). We share the consequences—sickness, suffering, tears and death—of Adam's transgression, and in no way the guilt. He did not violate the law for me, for you, for every man, but for himself; hence the "Adamic sin," the supposition that sin is transmitted from one generation, and communicated from one man to another, is false—the child of some speculative, superstitious, sectarian brain. We have enough sins of our own to answer for, without becoming accountable for the sins of other. Why should I be held responsible for the sins of my predecessors? Where is the justice in such a procedure? If I inherit

sin from Adam, why not from Noah, from my father? I I am answerable for all the sins that have been committed from Adam down, my condition is certainly beyond the hope of redemption. Either I share the guilt and responsibility of the sins of all my fathers from Adam down, or I am not responsible for any save my own. There is no escape from this. The method of reasoning prevalent in our pulpits is this: Adam sinned first. He was the head or representative of the race, of all men. Therefore all men sinned in him. The premises do not, in my judgment, justify the conclusion. Why not sever the process and hold Adam accountable for my sins, for the sins of the world? He committed the first sin. In consequence of this act, God drove him away from the tree of life, and we inherit a frail body—a body susceptible of temptation—from him. He was in as good, if not better, place to resist temptation, or evil, as we are. It is just as reasonable and just to hold him accountable for our sins as to hold us accountable for his. I thank God that I am only guilty in his sight of my own sins (Ezek. xviii. 4), and the supposition that I am responsible for the sins of others, because they lived before me, is purely imaginary. Jesus Christ, in his death on the cross, made provision for the forgiveness of "our sins" (I. Cor. xv. 1-6), our personal transgressions; but none whatever for our hereditary sins. What does this signify? Either that we have no sins but our own, or the atonement is insufficient to save a single man, and the world is doomed. Picture to yourselves a man trying to repent of Adam's sins, or the sins of his father! A man can not repent without a motive. Where is the motive to lead to such a repentance? The answer is short and decisive. There is no such sin, and

therefore no such repentance. Seek to be cleansed from your own sins. This involves your eternal all.

How did man become a sinner? Let us look into the particulars. The serpent, cunning, artful, wicked, approached the woman. He did not use any mysterious means to reach her mind. He seemed to understand something about the nature of man, for he began to talk, reason, persuade. He did not use any forcible means of ejectment, but addressed himself to the woman, and through her the man. Note the conversation. "And he said unto the woman, Yea hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die, for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Gen. iii. 1-5). This Scripture places additional emphasis on what I have said concerning spiritual influence. Even the devil himself adopted means in harmony with the constitution of man. Step by step he proceeded with his deceptive argument until his hearer was convinced; until she turned away from God; until she took of the forbidden tree and gave also to her husband (Gen. iii. 6). In a moment they felt their guilt; for guilt, a deep realization of it, inevitably follows wrong doing. Of what were they guilty? Of doing what God told them not to do. When did they become guilty? When they heard the devil's argument? When they received it, believed it? When they turned from God? Their disobedience was not complete until

they had broken a positive divine law. In other words, not until they had touched and partaken of the forbidden tree. Hearing and believing the argument of Satan were only preparatory to the final, the actual, transgression. Bear this in mind and it will assist you greatly in comprehending the restoration or redemption, the law of pardon through Jesus the Christ.

Did God send an angel to drive them out of the garden? No. Did he send some dark and mysterious power to execute the penalty of the insulted law? By no means. He walked into the garden as before. Adam and his wife hid themselves among the trees of the garden. Why did they do this? Because they had lost their power of thought, their will power? The Bible clearly teaches that they did it because they were afraid; because they realized their guilt. If they lost all ability of will and became wholly inclined to evil, if their minds became so clouded and if they became such barbarians as some of the theologians seem to think, how did they know anything about their condition? How did they know that they were naked? How did they know anything? They had as good minds after the transgression as they did before. Who can produce any proof to the contrary? Their memory was not destroyed, for they remembered every particular of the temptation and transgression. Adam knew enough to blame his wife and she attempted to excuse herself by saying that the serpent had deceived her. They did not lose a single faculty, mental, moral or spiritual, but they subsequently lost their home in the garden, and became exposed to sorrow, sickness and death. That they still possessed the ability to use their mental faculties as they did before the transgression, is fully sustained by the fact

that God talked with them as he had done before. Would he have spoken to them if they had lost their ability to understand? Has God ever addressed man in language that he could not understand? If so, when and where? If you will do some honest thinking along this line of argument you will soon discover that there is much embraced in the creeds and published throughout the land under the guise of truth that is nothing but the rankest error and speculation. God drove them out. Why did he do this? In order that he might satisfy the demands of his broken law, in order that they might die. Did the Lord mean instantaneous death when he said, "Dying thou shalt die"? If so why did he drive them out of the garden to keep them away from the tree of life? If he meant what is generally called "spiritual death," they were already dead; hence the testimony of the apostle: "When lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (Jas. i. 15). Sin was not finished in Adam until after the expiration of nine hundred and thirty years (Gen. v. 5). The death of the body is progressive, and the "second death" lies beyond the death of the body.

We have only a brief account of the descent or departure of man from God, but it brings out some important facts. How many downward steps did he take? Please count as I rehearse. (1) Man's exalted position in the garden and in the favor of God. (2) The tempter. (3) The argument in his mind. (4) Speaking to or addressing the mind. (5) Hearing and considering. (6) Deciding, accepting, believing. (7) Turning from God. (8) Turning to evil. (9) Disobeying the law. (10) Guilt realized by the sinner. (11) Con-

demnation. (12) Banishment from the garden. (13) The beginning of death. (14) The gates of Eden were closed and the tree of life was guarded by a sentinel appointed by the Lord. I think I have a right to ask you, in view of these distinct facts, if you think man fell? When he stepped out of the garden he began to die, and therefore plunged himself and his descendants into mortality and its attendant frailties. We do not inherit sin from Adam, for, as before shown, sin is the result of doing; the "transgression of the law." We die naturally because of Adam's sin, but if we die eternally it will be the result of our own sins. This is the reason that infants die, although they are as innocent of sin, actual transgression of the laws of God, as the angels of heaven (Rom. v. 14). The old dogma that has worked into the faith of some that all men are responsible for Adam's sins, and that the elect infants dying in infancy are regenerated in death, and that the non-elect are consigned to hell for the glory of God, is worse than infidelity—the very climax of sin-inspired ignorance, and blacker than the darkness of the bottomless pit!

What is meant by the restoration of man? That God redeems, saves or restores him unconditionally, or that he assists him to retrace his steps? Man can not by his own efforts save himself from the guilt and consciousness of sin. If God saves him, therefore, he will be worthy of all glory and praise, whether he does it conditionally or unconditionally. Who is the greater philanthropist, the man who puts a poor, struggling mortal in a position to help himself, or the man who does it all for him? Unquestionably the former. This is precisely what God has done for us. By the life (John x. 10) and death (I. Pet. ii. 24) of his only begotten Son

he placed us in a position to help ourselves, to save ourselves (Acts ii. 40). God was reconciled to us through his Son; and we must therefore be reconciled to him (II. Cor. v. 14–23). He has done his part, and we must do our part or perish. The theory of a direct regenerating power is supported by men who are still praying for God to be reconciled to men, when the Bible teaches that he has been reconciled to us ever since Jesus died (Rom. v. 6–8). It is useless and dangerous in the extreme for us to pray to God to accept us unless we accept the Redeemer and do what he commands. What would you think of a beggar who would refuse to eat the bread you put within his reach, and show his contempt for your kindness by praying for you to satisfy his hunger? Such a man is just as consistent as the man who prays for pardon while refusing to submit to the terms of pardon dictated by Jesus Christ. Would you, could you bless and help the beggar who scorns your benevolence? Will God save a man who rejects the gospel of Christ and attempts to "climb up some other way" (John x. 1)? Reconciliation is already here within your grasp. Will you accept it? Will you accept it on the conditions submitted by him who bought you with his own precious blood? (I. Cor. vi. 20).

What are the conditions on which men are reconciled to God? Here are the propositions corresponding to those in the transgression. Man's sinful and helpless condition. "When we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. v. 6). "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world" (Ti. ii. 11, 12). The

grace or favor of God was "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II. Cor. viii. 9), manifested to us when we were unable to help ourselves. We appropriate this grace "through faith" (Eph. ii. 8) and obedience (Acts x. 34, 35). (2) Jesus Christ, the manifestation of God to human minds and human eyes. "God was manifested in the flesh" (I. Tim. iii. 16). (3) The will of God revealed through Christ. "Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (I. Cor. i. 24). (4) Speaking to or addressing the minds of men. "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts" (Jer. xxxi. 33). "Hear and understand" (Matt. xv. 10). (5) Hearing and considering the demands of the truth. "Hear, O heaven, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord hath spoken" (Isaiah i. 2). "Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die" (Ezk. xviii. 28). (6) Deciding, accepting, believing. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power" (Ps. cx. 3). "I will arise and go to my father" (Luke xv. 18). "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31). (7) Turning to God. "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you" (Jas. iv. 8). (8) Turning from sin. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah lv. 7). (9) Obedience to the positive divine law in baptism for the remission of sins. "But ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered unto you, being then made free from sin, ye become the servants of righteousness" (Rom. vi. 17, 18). "Arise, and be baptized, and wash

away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts xxii. 16). (10) Pardon an act of God received and enjoyed by the obedient believer through the promises of the Lord Jesus Christ. "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jer. xxxi. 34). "It is God that justifieth" (Rom. viii. 33). "And we are his witnesses of these things, so is also the Holy Spirit whom God hath given to them that obey him" (Acts v. 32). (11) Justification through faith and works. "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 1). "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified and not by faith only" (Jas. ii. 24). (12) Citizenship in the kingdom of God. "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son; in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Col. i. 13, 14). (13) The beginning of the new life. "Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new" (II. Cor. v. 16). "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20). (14) The gates of heaven ajar. "By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh" (Heb. x. 20). "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Rom. xxii. 14). There were fourteen steps from Eden down to the helplessness of sin, and there are fourteen steps from sin to heaven. Behold the contrast. The garden and its

delights; sin and its consequences. The tempter; Jesus Christ, the Saviour. The argument in Satan's mind; the will of God in Christ. Speaking a falsehood; preaching the truth. Hearing and considering a lie; hearing and considering the claim of Christ. Deciding for the evil, believing the lie and accepting its consequences; deciding for the truth, believing in Jesus, accepting the authority of the apostles. Turning from God, turning to sin; turning to God, turning from sin. Disobeying the law; obeying the gospel. Condemnation the act of God; pardon the act of God. Banishment from God; membership in the Church of Christ. The beginning of death; the beginning of life. The gates of Eden closed; the gates of heaven ajar. Believing a lie and turning from God were preparatory steps to the violation of the law, and believing the gospel and turning from sin prepares a man to obey the truth and become a child of God. The transgression involved three changes. The restoration embraces the same. Read the account and you will discover that there was a change of heart, life and relationship, and in each particular the change was toward sin, away from God. The gospel simply reverses this process of departure, and restores man to God.

The way to heaven is strait and plain, and you will never reach it unless you turn from your sins. You can not take two steps at a time, nor can you step over or neglect whatever you dislike. You can not believe and turn from sin, and neglect obedience to the law of liberty. Do you refuse to be baptized? Why? Because you can not see how it can wash away your sins? I presume Adam and Eve could not see how eating fruit could take away holiness, but it did. It was not the fruit; it was

disobedience to God. If disobedience, as the result of unbelief, made man a sinner, there is no doubt that obedience to the law of Jesus Christ, which he sanctified with his own blood, will remove every stain of sin and make us children of God. It is a question of faith. Do you believe in Christ? Are you willing to do what he commands and trust him for what he has promised? He has said, and his promise can not fail, that the obedient believer "shall be saved" (Mark xvi. 16). Shall be saved! Grand and glorious promise! Would to God I could ring it through all the lands and seas of earth. Can you well doubt his word?

SERMON IV.

THE REGENERATION.

TEXT: "Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefor? And Jesus said unto them, Verily, I say unto you, That ye that have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man small sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. xix. 27, 28).

What is regeneration? Why is regeneration needed? What produces regeneration? How does a man know, or what evidence can he have, of his regeneration? Can a man do anything towards the regeneration of other men, of the world? Can a man do anything toward his own regeneration? What is meant by "the regeneration" of the text? What does the Apostle Paul mean by "the washing of regeneration" (Titus iii. 5)? Is regeneration through the gospel, or is it the result of a power outside of the gospel? Is the religious world agreed on the meaning of this proposition? Can the world be brought to Christ while his professed followers are not agreed touching the way it is to be done? If a man has been regenerated, is he saved, justified, adopted? Is he a Christian? Is he what the New Testament requires that he shall be? Will our knowledge of "the regeneration increase" with our knowledge of the truth?

These are important questions, and I ask your earnest attention while I attempt to discuss them in the light of

the gospel. If it does not solve these mighty problems they are mysteries that can not be penetrated by human power, hence our constant inquiry shall be, What does the Bible say? What does it ask us to believe? What does it command? What does it promise? I shall first attempt to answer them in the light of the theology of the present day, and afterward in the light of the apostolic times. It is not a pleasant task to discuss the shortcomings, contradictions and inconsistencies of those who consider themselves the exponents of the Christian religion; but my allegiance to the Bible, my accountability to God for what I do not say if I fail to "speak as the oracles of God" (I. Pet. iv. 11) and my interest in the souls of men demand that I shall oppose error, combat superstition, and "preach the word" (II. Tim. iv. 2) without compromising with tradition or speculation. In order to put the matter to a practical test, interview a few of your religious neighbors and ask them the simple question, What is regeneration? and you will be surprised at the diversity of answers which you will receive. Your astonishment will be greatly increased when you find that no two of the answers are precisely alike, and that to the popular mind regeneration is a deeply mysterious subject. While they profess to have passed through it, and to have experienced its blessings, they are not certain what it means. Ignorance of the Bible is truly alarming; but is it any wonder when we consider that men are taught, when the preachers assert, when a large majority of professing Christians believe and sincerely advocate to the extent of their ability, that regeneration is an act of God outside and independent of the revelation of his will recorded in the Bible? I affirm, without fear of successful contradiction, that the advo-

cates of the direct work of the Holy Spirit in conversion are largely responsible for the prevailing, widespread and astonishing indifference to Bible study. Why should I study the Bible; why should I hide the law of God (Ps. cxix. 11) in my heart; why should I meditate upon its principles, precepts and provisions "day and night" (Ps. i. 2), if it is a sealed book, if I can not understand it until God unlocks it by opening my heart by a regenerating process, or power that rules out all co-operation between the human and the divine, and sets aside all human accountability and all divine law? Why should I "search the Scriptures" (John v. 39) if they are not enough to save me until the Lord imparts additional power? Why should I study to be an approved workman in the preaching of the word (II. Tim. ii. 15) if I enjoy a direct communication with God as the apostles claimed? Men reason concerning the demands of religion, and as they have been taught from childhood to believe that regeneration is the work of the Spirit outside of the word of truth, they naturally lay the Bible aside as a meaningless book. Why should they not? Is it reasonable or just to expect a man to devote his time to the investigation of a book that he can not understand, that will not do him any good? To what inconsistencies men are driven by speculation, this order of speculation particularly! Pious and God-fearing people, people who are deeply concerned about their future happiness, pray in their families and in the church for God to send converting power down upon their children and neighbors; say in their presence that God alone can do the work, and then exhort, beg, entreat them to read the Bible inasmuch as it contains the will of God, the way of salvation! Preachers expound the

Bible in the public places, exhort the people to receive its teachings and obey its commands, and close by informing them that regeneration and deliverance from sin are the work of the Holy Spirit, and that they can not do anything until "the power" comes down. Hence they pray for the Lord to come down and save the people. The Bible is a good book in which to find a text; an arsenal where every sect may go and secure arms and ammunition for the great religious warfare; but as a regenerating power they completely ignore it. It matters not what the Bible reveals, commands or promises, it is ruled out and God is urged to pour out his Spirit and regenerate the people. O blindness, the inconsistency, the bigotry, the skepticism, the darkness, the contradiction, the destruction, of religious superstition! Modern religious denominations, taking their revivals as criteria, and their preachers as witnesses, have more fanaticism, more speculation, more animal excitement than revealed religion, apostolic Christianity.

They do not give the credit to the gospel, which is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. i. 16), and they completely neglect the conditions on which the Bible promises forgiveness, and place all the stress upon the sinner's willingness to pray and the willingness of the church to pray for him. This is a severe charge, and I assure you that it gives me no pleasure to make it; but the truth must be told, it matters not who suffers as the result. If you doubt the truthfulness of this accusation open your Bible and compare its requirements with the practices of the people around you, and you will be convinced. I believe in God. I therefore believe he will hear and answer prayer if it does not exceed the bounds of his promises; but no man

is promised pardon in answer to prayer unless he mixes obedience with his petition. These misconceptions of what regeneration means lie at the foundation, and are therefore the source of numerous and soul-destroying errors. When men rule the Bible—the will of God expressed in the gospel of Christ—out of the regenerating process, is it any wonder that they do not hesitate to deny any part of it, or attempt to rule out its ordinances, or modify their force, which is the same? Is it any wonder that they do not rely on the promises of the gospel as an evidence of pardon, and place their hopes for salvation on a claim that they have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit as the apostles did? I am not surprised that the preaching and work of the apostles should be neglected by people who claim the same inspiration and direct assistance that they enjoyed. I affirm, and I challenge investigation, that the converts of modern revivals, according to their own testimony, as seen in the endless variety of experiences which they tell, do not claim less infallible guidance than the apostles of Jesus Christ claimed. What are the results of such pretensions? The experience of one man is quoted as guide for another, and the apostles are not even referred to. The apostles received the baptism of the Holy Spirit in order that they might be guided into all truth (John xiv. 26), but their testimony is no better authority than the testimony of men who live to-day, if they have received the same baptism from on high. Does the New Testament sustain men in such claims as these? Did Jesus Christ promise the baptism of the Holy Spirit to all the world, or even to the church of all ages. He did not. Do you deny the assertion? I am open to conviction. Present your proof. There

have been, according to the Bible, only two baptisms of the Holy Spirit since the beginning of time: one on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 1–4) the other at the house of Cornelius, the Gentile (Acts x. 44–46). Peter declares that they were the same (Acts xi. 15). Here are the facts developed on each occasion. Can you point to anything similar to them in modern times? (1) They were all with one accord and in one place. (2) A sound, yes, an audible sound, came down from heaven. (3) It came like a rushing, mighty wind. (4) It filled all the house where they were sitting. (5) Cloven tongues similar to fire set upon each of them. (6) They were all filled with the Holy Spirit. (7) They spoke with "other tongues," or languages which they had never learned. Behold the pretended baptisms of the Holy Spirit of our times. Do they correspond or agree? (1) The people are never in one accord; there are divisions among them. (2) No sound is ever heard from heaven. (3) No rushing mighty wind ever attests the descent of the Spirit of truth. (4) No house is ever filled with miraculous power. (5) Cloven tongues like unto fire do not sit upon the people. (6) Persons here and there claim that they have received the baptism of the Spirit. (7) They do not, can not, prove their professions by speaking with other tongues or in languages which they have never learned. Have you received the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Can you prove your assertion by speaking in Hebrew, Latin or Greek? If your profession can not be confirmed by such manifestations it is self-condemned, or it transcends the bounds of the promise of Jesus Christ and the authority of his apostles.

These preliminary observations are necessary now;

but in the days of the apostles such remarks would have been entirely irrelevant, for during those times men went everywhere preaching the word (Acts viii. 4). They labored under the infallible direction of the Spirit of truth, believing that the truth was sufficient to save the people (Acts x. 14), because it was pure truth; truth fresh from the mind of God. No thinking man can fail to perceive the difference. O for the religion of Jesus, pure and clear as it was when he published it to the world!

The passage that I quoted as an introduction to this discourse contains a promise made to the apostles, and it contains much food for reflection. Observe the punctuation. Jesus did not say: "You that have followed me in the regeneration," but "You that have followed me;" for "the regeneration" to which he referred had not begun, indeed its beginning was still some distance in the future. A slight change in the arrangement of the words will enable us to understand what the Master said: "Verily I say unto you, In the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit upon the throne of his glory, ye that have followed me shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." The regeneration refers to a definite period in the history of the world, in the plan of redemption. It does not imply simply one act, but it embraces the whole plan; all God has done for us, all he requires us to do for ourselves, and all he promises to do for us in the future. Does "the regeneration" mean any more or less than "the gospel" (Rom. i. 16); "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Rom. viii. 2); "the fullness of the time" (Gal. iv. 4); "the dispensation of the fullness of time" (Eph. i. 10); "a new and living way" (Heb. x. 20); or "the perfect law of liberty" (Jas. i. 25)! Jesus placed the regenera-

tion in the future, hence he did not refer to the law of Moses, or to the work that he was doing at the time this promise was made. This regeneration was to begin when he entered into the throne of his glory. When did he enter the throne of glory? "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am sat down with my Father in his throne" (Rev. iii. 21). When did he overcome? "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. i. 18). "And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. i. 4). He entered into the throne of his glory when he entered into heaven by his own blood, and not before (Heb. ix. 12). The "throne of glory" doubtless implies the throne of authority. Every word that is uttered from this throne is unchangeable, enduring and eternal. It is impossible to separate the regeneration and the throne of glory. Jesus Christ put them together; who will dare to attempt to put them asunder? Jesus evidently meant to impress on the minds of the apostles the fact that through their preaching he would at the proper time revolutionize—"turn the world upside down" (Acts xvii. 6). When did he turn the world upside down? During his life and labors on earth? His labors were confined to the land of the Jews—a very small part of the world. When did he sit on the throne of his glory—while on earth? He did not even have a place on which to lay his head (Matt. viii. 20). When did he claim all authority in heaven and in earth? When he was born in Bethlehem; when he was baptized of John in the Jordan (Mark i. 9); when he called the

apostles, or when he sent them forth to preach the gospel of the kingdom (Matt. x. 5); when he spoke in parables (Matt. xiii. 34, 45); when he suffered and prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke xxii. 39); or when he suffered and died upon the cross? No. According to his own words he came, not to do his own will, but to do his Father's will and manifest the Father's name and power (John xvii. 16). He adhered strictly to this mission to the end of his life (Heb. x. 5–9), and in one of the most solemn and impressive prayers ever uttered on earth he said: "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work thou gavest me to do" (John xvii. 4). After his resurrection, but never before, he announced that all power or authority had been give unto his hands (Matt. xxviii. 18).

The Lord laid great stress upon the fact that the apostles had followed him, and he places just as much stress upon the importance of following him now. Indeed, he gave them this promise of a grand position in the restoration of the world because they had followed him faithfully even when they were in the dark (Mark ix. 10). They manifested a disposition to do their best, and leave the results with their Teacher. Here is a lesson for us. When God commands, it is our duty to obey; when he leads, it is our duty to follow, whether we can comprehend the results or not. This is part of our religious education. Why did these men follow Jesus? Because they loved him. O the power of an earnest and consecrated man who loves the Lord with all his heart! They followed him and received undoubted evidence of his love and divinity. They—Peter, James and John—were with him when Moses and Elijah laid their victories and trophies at his feet; when he unlocked the

mystic gates and gave them a glimpse of his glory and the hereafter; when the Father's voice resounded through earth and sky: "This is my beloved Son; hear ye him" (Mark ix. 2–10)! They were with him when God proved him by miracles, wonders and signs (Heb. ii. 3, 4). They forsook everything for him, and shared his poverty and suffering. They listened to his voice as the voice of God. They sat down with him at his last passover, and received the loaf and cup as memorials of him for all time (Luke xxii. 19, 20). What they suffered during the three days from the passover until they were convinced of his resurrection no mortal tongue can ever tell. They saw him, they ate with him, they handled him, they knew him after he arose from the dead (John xxi. 12). Luke says the evidences of his return to life were numerous and infallible, no possibility of a mistake (Acts i. 3). They caught the spirit of his life, his truth, his self-denial, his self-sacrifice, his kingdom. They saw him ascend heavenward, and the bright cloud received him out of sight. By faith they saw him enter into heaven as the mighty conqueror of death and the grave. They saw him recognized as "the King of kings and Lord of lords" (I. Tim. vi. 15). They saw him carry our ransomed nature up to "the throne of glory" and become our great high priest "after the power of an endless life" (Heb. vii. 16), while the angels of heaven bowed before him and redemption's anthem rang through the city of God. Who will deny that they were qualified to preach the gospel of Christ and sit upon thrones of judgment unto the end; until every knee bows to Jesus and every tongue confesses his name to the glory of God (Phil. ii. 9–11).

Jesus, the Christ, redeemed the world (John iii. 16,

17), and as all power in heaven and in earth is given into him, he has the inalienable right to dictate the conditions on which we may have life, or give it to us without conditions; to send it directly from the throne of glory, or through the instrumentality of the gospel. That salvation is conditional is proven by the fact that all blessings are offered to us on conditions, and further, a man can not enjoy pardon unless he is prepared to receive it. If he were to send pardon down on us at this moment, there are some present who could not appreciate it because they love sin. No man can be forgiven until he ceases to love and forsakes his sins, and no man c n do this save by the power of divine truth—the demands which it enforces; hence the remission of sins is conditional. If he sends salvation directly from heaven, why is it that people who have never heard of the cross do not receive him and enjoy what he has promised? He came by way of the cross to redeem us, and we must go by way of the cross—the plan of which it is the center—in order to be saved. This is the truth, and there is no chance for deviation from it. When the apostles speak of "preaching the cross" (I. Cor. i. 16) he does not mean that we are to hold up to the gaze of the people the modern cross, nor that we are to proclaim only the Saviour's death for "the remission of sins" (Matt. xxvi. 28), but that we are to "preach the gospel to every creature," the conditions it includes, and as "embassadors for Christ" beseech men to "be reconciled to God" (II. Cor. v. 20). Either men are saved on conditions or they are not; there are not, there can not, be two ways to heaven if the Bible is true. If regeneration is the result of the power of God exerted directly upon the heart, the gospel is the most stupend-

ous failure in the history of the world. Why were there no persons regenerated between the ascension of Jesus and the day of Pentecost? Do you say it was because the gospel was not preached? Do you think preaching the gospel is necessary if men are saved in answer to prayer?

What of the mission of the apostles? What was their work? Jesus promised that they should sit upon thrones; not only upon thrones, but upon thrones of judgment. As a matter of fact, we know that they did not sit on thrones and reign as kings; it is therefore certain that he meant something else. A man who sits upon a throne is a man of authority; his word is law; his will is not, can not, be disregarded. The apostles occupied thrones—positions of great authority—in the kingdom of God. The promise and authority of Jesus lifted the apostles to places of preeminent, of unchangeable, of universal authority in the history of the world and the restoration of men to "the peace of God" (Eph. iii. 15). They—not their sucessors in office, for they had none—were to occupy thrones of judgment; not simply for Israel, but for all the world; not only for the land of Judea, but for all lands; not alone for that age, but for all ages. Jesus Christ came to represent the Father, and he therefore spoke the Father's words (John v. 19). As the Father sent the Son, so he sent the apostles (John xvii. 18). Were the words of Jesus final? Were they an expression of the will of God? The preaching of the apostles was none the less an expressson of the will of Christ. Is there any appeal from the words of Jesus? None. Neither is there any appeal from the preaching of the apostles.

If Jesus sends the Holy Spirit down on people now in order to convert them, why did he not send the Spirit

out from Nazareth, his home, and convince the Jews that he had come into the world? Because it was his desire to preach to them, to identify himself with their interests, to share their sorrows and to give them facts as a basis for action and experience. There is power in the human heart. How wonderfully a man's voice indicates the burden that presses within! Think of a voice sanctified by love untold, fresh from the heart that carried the eternal interests of the world, and you have some idea of the depth and tenderness of the messages of Jesus. Is it any wonder that they moved men to action? Why was the Holy Spirit not sent directly to the minds of the wicked Jews in the city of Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, instead of sending him to the apostles, and promising him to them if they would obey what the apostles preached? I demand of the advocates of an independent spiritual influence, or power, in conversion, an answer to this question. I can answer it. Jesus Christ had committed the word or ministry of reconciliation, the future conquests of his kingdom, the regeneration of the world, into the hands of men, and the Jews were not prepared to receive and enjoy the Spirit of truth, nor is any other man before he has submitted to the requirements of the gospel (Acts ii. 38; Acts v. 32). Why was the Holy Spirit sent to the apostles? To re-convert them, to lift them into the enjoyment of the "higher life"? Neither; but to enable them to be infallible witnesses of what they had seen and heard (John xv. 26); that they might proclaim the will of God in its fullness; that the gospel as they preached it, and that the law of pardon which they submitted, might be an unchangeable guide to all succeeding generations (II. Tim. iii. 15–17; II. Pet. i. 16–21).

The Holy Spirit was promised to the apostles with the assurance that he should remain forever (John xiv. 14–17). Do you believe this? Careful, now! Do you really and truly believe it? If so, why do you pray to God to send the Holy Spirit down from heaven with converting and sin-destroying power? Has he failed to keep his word; to redeem his promise? If not, the Holy Spirit is still in the world, and you insult Jesus Christ to his face by uttering such a prayer. Can you do it and be guiltless in the great day? Will you run the risk? The Holy Spirit is here, but how? Not with miraculous power, as on the day of Pentecost and through the apostolic ministry, but in and through the truth of God (John vi. 63). Are the messages of the New Testament, the sermons delivered by the apostles, the letters written to the church, any less inspired, any less the will of God, any less the truth, any less the words of the Holy Spirit, than when God spoke through men (Matt. x. 20) at the beginning (Isaiah ii. 2, 3), and all through the apostolic times? The Comforter is "the Spirit of truth." Not simply truth, but the spirit, the life of the truth! Does truth, the spirit of truth, ever die? If God spoke through men at the beginning, can he not, does he not, speak through the New Testament now? If the preaching of the apostles was true once, is it not true now? If they sat upon thrones once do they not sit upon thrones now? If the gospel met the wants of men in the past, saved them from sin, will it not do it now? Does it lose any of its power on account of its age? If so all truth, gospel truth, is powerless, for no one has discovered anything new since the last apostle died. Why did the Lord not baprize the evangelists of the apostolic and subsequent ages with

the Holy Spirit? Because the apostles were inspired to preach, teach and record the will of God, and no inspiration but the inspiration of truth and honesty is necessary to promulgate that which is a matter of record, especially as no man has a right to change it, to add to it, subtract from it, or substitute anything else for it (Gal. i. 8, 9; Rev. xxii. 18, 19).

If God should move men now as he moved the prophets and the apostles; if he were to inspire them, could they improve the Bible, the New Testament? Why are there no inspired men now? They are not needed, for the New Testament contains all things necessary to the redemption, enlightenment and restoration of the world to God. Could an inspired man living now add anything to or take anything from that which has descended to us from the apostles of Christ? Could he reveal a more loving and compassionate Father, or a more loving and sympathetic Saviour, than we find in the New Testament (Heb. ii. 16–18)? Could he preach a better gospel than the gospel of Christ (I. Cor. xv. 1–6)? Could he offer a stronger motive to lead men to repentance than the love of God (Rom. ii. 4), or the coming judgment (Acts xvii. 31)? Could he exalt the name of Jesus more than the apostles exalt it (Acts iv. 11, 12; Eph. i. 21–23; Phil. ii. 9–11)? Could he make the way plainer than it is now (Isaiah xxxv. 8)? Could he settle the baptismal question by using plainer language than "one baptism" (Eph. iv. 5), and "buried with him by baptism into death" (Rom. vi. 4)? Could he make the baptism of Jesus plainer than by saying he was baptized in the river Jordan, and that he came up, straightway up, out of the water, after he was baptized (Mark i. 9, 10)? Could he make the baptism of the

eunuch any plainer than by saying they came unto a certain water, went down into the water, where the baptizing was done, and after which they came up out of the water and rejoiced in the promises of Christ (Acts viii. 26–40)? Could he use a more forcible argument in favor of the unity of the church than the prayer of Jesus Christ (John xvii. 20), and the unanimous testimony of the apostles (I. Cor. i. 10; Eph. iv. 1–7)? Could he make a preacher's responsibility greater than Paul makes it (Gal. i. 8, 9)? Could he increase the strength of our obligations to preach and support the gospel (II. Cor. viii. 1–24)? Could he increase the necessity for holy living (Phil. ii. 14, 15)? Could he give us a stronger description of the end of the world than that which fell from the lips of Jesus (Matt. xxv. 31–46)? Could he more than "thoroughly furnish us unto all good works" (II. Tim. iii. 17)?

Again I ask, why does the Father not send the Holy Spirit directly to the hearts of sinners in order to their conversion? Because this would break the promise of Jesus and dethrone the apostles, nullify the facts of the gospel, destroy the power of the cross, disregard the conditions on which salvation is promised, and leave "the hope of the gospel" (Col. i. 23) without foundation. Let me emphasize the fact that our hope—the Christian hope—is the hope of the gospel; the hope growing out of the confidence we have in the fulfillment of the promises of Jesus to those who by faith accept his sacrifice and obey his word; not the hope that God has or will regenerate us when it pleases him! No system of religion is true that in any way disregards the authority of the apostles, modifies their teaching, or gives the glory of our salvation to any power that does

not embrace the facts—the death, burial and resurrection of Christ; and the conditions—faith in Christ as a personal Saviour, repentance or turning from sin, confessing the name of Jesus Christ, and baptism for the remission of sins—of the gospel.

What is an apostle? What does the word signify? One who is sent. Sent where? Anywhere. Who were the apostles? Men who were called, qualified and sent into the world by Jesus Christ. Why did he call them? In order that they might follow him. Why did he qualify them? That they might be reliable witnesses of his life, his doctrine, his resurrection. Why bear witness of his resurrection? Because it is the foundation of the Christian system (I. Cor. xv. 12–20). Why did he send them? That they might preach the gospel to every creature (Mark xvi. 15, 16). Deliverance from sin is for men. Men are therefore the best agents to publish the conditions and blessings of forgivegess. Did these men enjoy special authority? Read your Bible and your ignorance will be destroyed, and it will never prompt you to ask such a question again. Jesus promised Peter "the keys of the kingdom," with the emphatic declaration: "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. xvi. 19). *Whatsoever* is a very comprehensive word. It dees not imply that some of the things that should be bound on earth should be ratified in heaven, and others left to the approval or rejection of men. Do you discriminate between the demands of the gospel, and receive one part and reject another? If you do, you insult the authority and dignity of the apostles, and therefore of Jesus Christ himself. What does this promise to Peter

mean, that God will save you while you live in defiance of the teachings of the "Acts of the Apostles"? Jesus explained this promise after the resurrection, and his explanation included all of the apostles. Will you receive his own words? "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained" (John xx. 23). What do you think of this? Have you been saved, according to the terms dictated by the apostles? They stood before the world in the name of Jesus Christ, and preached with the assurance that their words would be ratified in the courts of heaven for all time. Do you longer doubt, or deny the apostles the peace in the regeneration of the world that Jesus gave them? Do you expect to get to heaven when you disregard their demands? If so, on what do you base this expectation? On something the Lord will do for you? What can he do for you while you treat the embassadors of his Son with contempt? Nothing! nothing but banish you into the blackness of darkness forever. If the apostles were commissioned by him who wields the scepter of universal authority, if they were to sit upon thrones from the beginning of "the regeneration" unto the "end of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 20), if they had the power to open the kingdom of God to all nations, if they had power to bind and loose in the name of Jesus Christ, if they were commanded to "teach all nations," if they had the power to remit and retain sins on the conditions dictated by the Spirit of God, are they not worthy to be heard, and should not their preaching be the end of all doubt and confusion among men who desire to be saved?

The work of the apostles was a special work. Hence the special call and special qualification. They knew

Jesus as a personal friend and brother, and they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit before they began to preach. This insured infallible guidance in the work they were commanded to inaugurate in the city of Jerusalem and push to "the uttermost parts of the earth" (Acts i. 4–8). Why all this mighty preparation, if regeneration is a work outside of the New Testament? Why all this sacrifice, this anguish of spirit, this labor and anxiety, if the gospel is insufficient to save us, if we must appeal from the apostles to the throne of heaven? Jesus promised the apostles that he would remain with them until the end of the world; not their end, but the end of the world. Was the promise good? Did he keep it? The apostles are dead and their graves are lost and forgotten, but the end of the world is yet in the future. Either the promise of Jesus has failed, or he recognizes the works of the apostles as he did before they died. Either the Holy Spirit is in the sermons of the apostles, carrying conviction to the world, or the New Testament is a book without any power or meaning. He commanded them to preach the gospel to every nation, to every creature? Did they obey this command? They preached the gospel to the world as far as they knew the world, but there are millions of the race who have never heard of Jesus. Either the apostles did not fulfill their mission—do their whole duty—or they are preaching yet, and will continue to preach Jesus Christ, and him crucified (I. Cor. i. 23), until sin is banished from earth; until "The kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ" (Rev. xi. 15). Why did Jesus call the apostles? Why did he instruct them? Why did he promise to be with them unto the end? That they might live a few years and

pass, with their works, into oblivion? His own words ought to answer. They do answer: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name he may give it you" (John xv. 16). Did they go and preach, and does their fruit remain? There are more people who accept their authority to-day than ever before. Thank God for a gospel that does not grow old!

There are many preachers now who claim to be called and sent by the Lord. Does the New Testament establish these claims? Were Timothy, Titus, Triphena, Triphosa, Urbane, Lucien, Jason, and many others who labored with the apostles in the gospel, sent by a direct, special and overwhelming call from God? If so, the New Testament says nothing about it. Do you say they could learn directly from the apostles, and therefore needed no special call? Can you not learn as much from the apostles as they did? If we can not, it is certain that the apostles' record is incomplete, and we have only a part of the gospel. The pretentions of the "called and sent" preachers of modern times are the very essence of fanaticism. If God calls and sends them, why do they not agree among themselves? Would he proclaim through the Apostle Paul that there is one baptism and then contradict it by calling one man to go and preach that sprinkling is baptism, another to preach that pouring is baptism, and then to rule the water out and put all the stress on the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and another to declare that baptism is non-essential, or that it is the invention of man? Would he inspire the apostles to preach the gospel to every creature, and build

up the one body of Christ (I. Cor. i. 10), and call men in our day to contradict their teaching, and preach only a part of the gospel, and thank God for the existence of division? Would he declare that the gospel is his power to save the people, and then call a man to go and exhort the people to pray for regeneration to come down from heaven? Would he condemn confusion in the early church (I. Cor. xiv. 33), and call and send men to go and conduct such meetings as you have all witnessed? If there is a special call, there is, there must be, a special qualification. Would God call a man to preach the gospel who could not do it, and would not if he could? He certainly would not. This to my mind is a sufficient reason to reject the presensions of such men, for a majority of those who say they are called are wofully ignorant of the Bible. Do you say the ignorant, unqualified, incompetent ones are not called? How do you know they are not called? Are you the judge? A man's consciousness, and not the opinion of some one else, is the test, according to your theory. But if God calls men he gives them a direct qualification, and an ignorant man—a man who is not acquainted with the Scriptures—is just as good material as can be found. Are you called? Let us see if you are. If a man has a call from God, as the apostles did, he will preach the truth. This is a settled question. From it there can be no appeal. If you are called of God to preach death-bed repentance, grave-yard scenes, and call men to the mourner's bench to "get religion" or "to get saved," why can you not confirm your mission? If you are called of God to engage in these practices you are in advance of the apostles, for they do not say anything about them; and your call is an indisputable evidence that the people did not have the full

gospel, and that the apostles either could not or would not preach the whole truth! If you are called of God to preach only a part of the gospel, and your call is an evidence that you are right, does not the Lord repudiate the New Testament? If you are called of God to publish the wisdom of men—to build up a system on their teaching that is not indorsed by the Bible—did the apostle speak falsely when he, by the authority of Jesus Christ, commanded the brethren to "be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment"? If you are called of God to substitute sprinkling for burial in baptism, why do you get offended when we ask for a "thus saith the Lord" for your practice? If you are called of God to do a special work, why does your work contradict the work of the apostles? If you are called of God to preach, why do you not "preach the word," and honor the name of Jesus Christ? When a man preaches "any other gospel," we can be infallibly sure that he has neither been called of God nor the truth. Well did the apostle say: "Try the spirits whether they are of God" (I. John iv. 1)!

We will put this theory to the test. Here is a man who says he enjoys a direct call from God. So did the apostles. He says he has been baptized with the Holy Spirit. So were the apostles of Christ. He says he has been baptized with the Holy Spirit repeatedly, and he prays for a new baptism on every important occasion. If there is anything in fullness and repetition, who enjoys the greater position of authority? Whose testimony is preferable? The weight of authority and divine recognition seems to be against the apostles; but behold there is a difference in what they preach. The apostles preached under a commission which said: "He that believeth and

is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark xvi. 16). His commission says: "He that believeth shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." They said to believing penitents: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts ii. 38). He says to them: "Regeneration is the work of God, and you can not do anything until the Lord comes in his mighty power." Which will you believe—the apostles? Then his pretended call is the work of imagination, and his professed baptism of the Holy Spirit a most disastrous delusion. Either there is a general call or no call. A man's natural talent, his attainments, his faith in God through the truth, his interest in the salvation of men and the opportunity which Providence gives him, demand of him his uttermost endeavor. Every Christian who is mentally, physically and spiritually qualified is called and sent to work for Jesus. The New Testament calls you; calls you now. It recognizes the fact that every man can do something, and must do it or perish; but the call to preach is no louder, no more divine, than the call to pray, to sing, to give, to suffer, or to work.

How are men regenerated under the gospel of Christ? this is the question that concerns us. Before he left the earth he appeared to his apostles in a mountain of Galilee, and said unto them: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Mark xvi. 15, 16). "Thus it is written, and

thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, and ye are witnesses of these things" (Luke xxiv. 46–48). "Peace be unto you; as my Father has sent me, even so send I you, receive ye the Holy Spirit; whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained" (John xx. 20–23). This is the last and great commission. We can not, we dare not, go behind it. We can not, we dare not, transcend its bounds. This commission includes every question concerning the regeneration of the world. Note these facts: (1) Go. (2) Preach or teach the gospel to the people. (3) Belief based upon what is preached. (4) Repentance as the result of accepting Jesus as the remedy for sin. (5) Baptism, "the bath of regeneration," for the remission of sins. (6) Teaching the disciples to abide in the doctrine of Jesus. (7) The presence of Jesus unto the end. The apostles carried this commission out to the very letter. (1) They were in Jerusalem, the proper place to begin. (2) They received the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth. (3) They preached the gospel. (4) The people heard and believed it. (5) They accepted the apostles as the representatives of Jesus Christ. (6) They repented, or changed their minds, in reference to the Messiah, and turned from their sins. (7) They were baptized into Christ. (8) They received the gift of the Holy Spirit. (9) They were added to the church. Every example of conversion recorded in the Acts of the Apostles harmonizes with this, if all the attendant circumstances are considered. The apostles would have been recreant to every principle of truth embraced in this commission if they had preached

one gospel in Jerusalem, another in Samaria, another among the Gentiles. God's method of regeneration is fully unfolded in the New Testament, and he has no other method. When a man comes to you as a preacher of the gospel you have a right to ask: Does he preach it in its fullness? Does he practice what he preaches? If not, he has not learned from the apostles, and he does not speak by the authority of Jesus Christ. No man who respects the New Testament as the "book of life" will search a part and neglect a part of it. A man who honors the Lord will not add anything to or take anything from the word. Will you receive the truth as Jesus Christ and the apostles left it? The strait and narrow way (Matt. vii. 14, 15) extends from you to heaven. It is the Lord's way, and there is no other way. It begins at the cross, and runs through the great commission, through the preaching of the apostles, and through obedience to the truth. Will you sell your soul for the world—for the ways of men? I ask you, God asks you, the Saviour asks you to decide this question now! Will you at this moment decide for heaven? I pause for a reply. God be merciful! Some souls must decide for heaven or hell!

The Saviour will come again. He will sit in the throne of his glory and power. We will gather around the judgment seat. "Every eye shall see him" (Rev. i. 7). You will be there! We will all be there! Ah! solemn, awful, terrible thought. Where will you stand in that day? What do you expect of the mighty Judge? What promise have you? Will he deny the apostles who lived and died for his cause, and put them to shame in the presence of men and angels, and say "Well done!" to you when you are too proud, too stubborn, too much

in love with your own way to do your duty now? He is ready and willing to save you now. He stands at the door and knocks. Will you let him in? He holds out his pierced hands. Listen, ye dying men and women! "I suffered this for you." Will you come to Jesus? Will you come in the way he demands? Will you submit to the requirements of the gospel? "Behold, now is the accepted time! Behold, now is the day of salvation" (II. Cor. vi. 2)!

SERMON V.

THE WORD OF RECONCILIATION.

TEXT: "Behold, where I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saint." (Jude 3.)

These stirring thoughts were addressed to the disciples of Christ, the Christians, or children of God, who lived during the time of the apostles, and through them to us. Who wrote them? Jude. Who was Jude? The servant of Jesus Christ. This entitles him to our respect and confidence. What was his work? He was an apostle, more than a servant, of Jesus Christ. What is an apostle? A person who was sent unto the world to preach the Gospel. Was Jude a competent witness in things pertaining to the kingdom of God? If not, his testimony can not be accepted. If so, his testimony can not be rejected. What are the elements of competency required of a witness? and did this man possess them? A witness must be honest. This man was honest, for if he had not been, Jesus Christ would not have selected him, and charged him with the responsible position which he filled. A witness must be present, and have an opportunity to see and understand that of which he is to testify. Jude was present and could testify positively and emphatically to what he saw; the man Christ Jesus; in his preaching, in his miracles, in his sufferings, after the resurrection. His testimony can not therefore be

ruled out. It must stand. In addition to his opportunities during the Lord's life on earth, he had from Pentecost forward "another comforter," helper, or teacher; he spoke under the immediate guidance, supervision and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. His words outweigh all the philosophical, scientific and theological speculations of the world. Why? Because he saw the Lord Jesus and therefore spoke the truth concerning him. The testimony of men who saw him can not be compared with those who lived with him, heard him and knew him.

Jude does not approach us simply as a man of information and reputation, but as a man laboring under the sanctity of a commission from God. All the apostles come in the same way. No one else can come to us as they do. He exhorted the brethren. He had a right to exhort them. It was his privilege to exhort, beseech, and entreat; but he had the right also to demand attention. When a man speaks as the embassador of Christ; when his words bear the weight of an eternal existence, and the emphasis of "all authority in heaven and in earth," we can not refuse to hear him or reject his demands. Every man who has written or spoken by divine authority occupies this position. The Bible is, therefore, the voice of God to man, the only voice we can hear in reference to this life or the next. Though God sits upon the throne of glory and power, his voice sounds through the requirements and promises of his word. Every book, every chapter, every verse, every thought is a message from him, a message that emphatically demands our thoughts, our attention, our respect and our confidence.

This apostle wrote with a specific end in view. This is one of the chief characteristics, one of the distin-

guishing features of everything in the Bible. All the men, incidents, nations that enter into its construction direct our thoughts to its author. He knew the condition of man and the wants of his nature, hence his messages to men are short, compact and to the point. Jude, as "the servant of Jesus Christ," wrote to the brethren, to exhort them to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." This faith must have been a matter of considerable importance, for he not only exhorted them to contend for it, but to "earnestly contend" for it. It evidently embraced something of momentous import, or this servant of God would not have shown so much interest in its perpetuity. A careful examination of the text identifies or connects "the faith which was once delivered to the saints" with "the common salvation." Look! light is breaking; this faith embraces the elements of our salvation. He did not exhort them to contend for a faith, or a part of the faith, or the faith that would be delivered according to the demands of the world through subsequent ages, as if "the faith" were to change with the times and manners of the people, as if there was not anything permanent and enduring connected with it, but for the faith that had been delivered already. The saints had received it and were in possession of it at that time.

What is the faith which was once delivered unto the saints? It is the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. It means more than our personal trust in Christ. There is no need to contend for that which is a matter of knowledge, for we know whether we trust him or not, but we can contend for the foundation of our trust and the acts which grow out of it. In other words, we have a right to defend Christ and his cause. What does it contain?

Everything in the gospel plan of salvation. When was it delivered to the saints? In apostolic times. By whom was it delivered to the saints? By Jesus Christ. Why was it delivered to them? In order that they might proclaim it to the ends of the earth. For whom was it intended? The world. To the faith, dead or living. It is of God, and therefore indestructible. Can man improve it? It is of God, and therefore perfect in itself. Where can we find it? In the New Testament. How can we know that we have it? By receiving and putting it into practice. Can a man be saved outside of "the faith?" If so, where is the proof of it.

These are simple assertions. We will now turn to the proof. What is the meaning of the phrase "the faith which was once delivered to the saints?" Does "once delivered" bring out the apostle's idea? I think not. I present this thought for your earnest study: whatever Jude meant by "the faith," there is no doubt of one thing, it was delivered once for all; for all ages and nations. Jesus Christ came to establish a permanent, enduring and unchangeable system. It is perfect in its arrangement, perfect in its simplicity, perfect in its adaptation to the wants of man. It is therefore certain that no change is needed. Faith means trust, confidence, or belief in God. "The faith" embraces everything in the gospel of Christ. Faith includes one act; "the faith," many acts, some of God, and some of men. Did all the apostles preach the same doctrine? They drew their inspiration and strength from the same source; hence, they were one in mind and judgment. Paul is a good witness. Here is his testimony: "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to-wit, God was in

Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now, then, are we embassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (II. Cor. v. 18, 20.) Facts are stubborn things. These are worthy of your studious consideration. The world had wandered away from God. Men were sinners in the government of God. This reconciliation embraces three propositions: (1) God was in Christ. Why was he in Christ? The New Testament answers: "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life, and not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation or atonement" (Rom. v. 10, 11.) There is no doubt that God is reconciled. It is therefore unnecessary to pray to God as many do, to be reconciled to us. It is our duty, our privilege to accept what has been done for us, for the world, through the Son of God. (2) The word or ministry of reconciliation was given to the apostles, and through them to us. The world goes astray on this proposition. Are men saved outside of this word or ministry of reconciliation? If so, God has two places of salvation. One through the "obedience of faith" (Rom. xvi. 25, 26); the other, according to the speculations of the religious denominations, through the outpouring and baptism of the Holy Spirit. What is the difference between "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints," and the "ministry of reconciliation" which was delivered to the embassadors or apostles of Christ? None whatever. Did this system embrace all things that are necessary to salvation? There is no doubt

of it. Did the apostles after preaching the gospel to the people, exhort them to pray for the outpouring of the Spirit of God? Did they ask sinners to signify their interest in the prayers of the church by standing up or by coming to a designated place for prayer? Did they teach receivers to expect an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon them? I answer emphatically, no! Do you say they did? Well, you are the man to find it. If it is in the New Testament, there is no man who is more anxious to find it than I am. (3) We must be reconciled to God. He is willing to save us; we must be willing to submit to his terms of salvation. When we turn away from the gospel and pray to God to save, he must either deny us or deny his word. Which will he do?

The most astonishing thing in the history of the world is the unwillingness of men to submit to and trust the word of the Lord for what he has promised to give. This unwillingness is born of selfishness, pride, ignorance, stubbornness, and error. "But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise. Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above;) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring Christ up again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach" (Rom. x. 7, 8.) Do you see the difference between the righteousness of faith and the righteousness of human speculation? Do you see the difference between God's way and man's way? God's way is the gospel, man's way is full of uncertainties. This is a great question, and I propose to settle it, or rather show that it was settled when the faith was delivered unto the saints. Did God give the apostles enough to save the

world when he gave them the word of reconciliation? Was the offering of Jesus sufficient to redeem all men? Is the plan of salvation a perfect plan? Does it contain enough to meet all our demands? Everything that God has made is perfect for that for which he made it, from the insect that lives but a day, to the burning, blazing worlds above us. Would he exhaust his power in material things and after four thousand years of preparation, after the sufferings of his Son, give us, and exhort us to contend for a faith, a plan or system, that is imperfect and therefore insufficient to save us? The very thought is preposterous, an insult to God and common sense! Yet this is precisely what he has done if the Bible must be set aside and salvation sent as a direct gift from heaven.

No man who believes the Bible can deny that men have always been instruments in the hands of God for the development of his plan to save the "willing and obedient" (Isaiah i. 19.) The apostles received a commission to make disciples of all nations. These men preached, suffered and died for their faith; in other words, for the truth. After all, preaching the gospel amounts to but little, if it does not purify our hearts and direct us in the way to heaven. How can the gospel be a living reality if the church has to pray, beseech and rend the very heavens with their prayers before God is willing to save? In our modern revivals the preacher expounds the words of truth, thrills his audiences with an exhortation to immediate action, a stirring song is sung and the brethren are expected to pray for God to send converting power down upon the people. Special prayers are offered for fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, neighbors, friends; and the people pray long enough and earnestly enough

to convert the world. Can we pray converting power down? If so, the gospel is a failure and the Lord is not ready to save sinners until we ask him to do it. If God saves one man in answer to the prayers of others, the same faith and the same prayer will save all men. What a responsibility rests upon such a man! If you can pray salvation down for one man, why not use the same faith and the same prayer and bring the world to Christ in a single day. Stop! reflect a moment. Has God promised pardon to those who ask it whether they believe and obey him or not? If so, is it not a waste of time to contend for the faith which Jesus delivered to the saints? If so, why did the Lord send men to preach the gospel and promise to save those who accepted it, and threaten, yes, declare that the unbeliever shall be damned?

What has God done for us? Anything, enough to save us? Is the work of reconciliation accomplished through Christ complete or incomplete? If it is complete, it meets all our wants. If it is not complete, our hopes of salvation based upon it can not endure. No one denies that the Lord's work was well done, completed in every particular. Is the ministry or word of reconciliation, the out-growth of the reconciliation wrought by the death of the Son? It is. Can it therefore be any less full, complete and perfect than the foundation on which it rests? If it can, those who think so are bound to produce the proof. If the ministry of reconciliation, or the gospel, is insufficient to save us, the whole scheme is a most awful failure. God's work is complete in every department. It is "the gospel of our salvation." (Eph. i. 13.) Will you accept it? Or will you reject it? You must decide for yourself. Will you do it?

Hereafter when you are tempted to question the power and adaptibility, and sufficiency of the gospel, remember that I warned you that no disobedience is so terrible as that which questions the works of God. When you say the gospel is a dead letter, conscience will thunder through your wicked heart the thought, the awful thought, that you deny the reconciliation of God to man through the life and death of Jesus. O blind and bigoted deceiver, I exhort you in the name of our loving Saviour, "Be ye reconciled to God." How can you, why will you refuse to surrender to the truth?

What part do men perform in the reconciliation of men to God? This is a practical question. God delivered the gospel to men. What are they to do with it? Preach it to others. What for? Let the apostles answer: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures; and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve; after that, he was seen of about five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time" (I. Cor. xv. 1–8.) Where did Paul get this gospel? "By revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. i. 12.) What he received from him he delivered to man. The brethren had received this. It saved them. They stood

in it. Its principles were kept in memory. It included three fundamental propositions, the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. These things were accomplished according to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and verified by the testimony of the apostles and "above five hundred brethren." Were they to keep it for themselves alone, or was it their duty to preach it to "every creature"? Peter, in the presence of the brethren of Jerusalem said: "Men and brethren, ye know that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel and believe" (Acts xv. 7.) This is a deeply interesting and instructive passage. It contains three thoughts that are worthy of your attention: God selected Peter to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. They heard the word as it came from his lips. They believed it. They were, according to Peter's own testimony, saved by words, by what he preached, by what they believed and did, by the Lord (Acts xi. 14.) Again, Paul testifies concerning the truth: "And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works: I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine" (II. Tim. iii. 15–17 and iv. 1, 2). Are you inquiring for the way of salvation? I point you to the holy Scriptures. Do you want faith in Christ Jesus? I

point you to the holy Scriptures. Do you ask for an inspired guide? I point you to the holy Scriptures. Do you ask for doctrine or teaching? I point you to the holy Scriptures. Do you need reproof? I point you to the holy Scriptures. Do you need correction? I point you to the holy Scriptures. Do you need instruction in righteousness? I point you to the holy Scriptures. Do you ask for a thorough equipment for every good work? I point you to the holy Scriptures. Do you want to know what to preach? I point you to the holy Scriptures. Can you, a sinner in the government of God, ask for more than the Scriptures promise? It is said that they contain eighteen thousand promises, made to the faithful and obedient. Yet you turn from all these and ask for a revelation, a special revelation, to enable you to trust and obey such a Father as the Scriptures make known! Such daring impudence, such recklessness!

Are you satisfied? If not, what will satisfy you? More Scriptures? Do we need a power to save us, to lead us to Christ, to salvation? "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Rom. i. 16, 17). Paul does not use any doubtful or modifying terms, but declares with all possible emphasis that the righteousness of God is revealed through the gospel and that it is his power to salvation. He does not even intimate that the gospel is the power of God to the salvation of man, when God accompanies it with his Spirit, nor that it is his power when the church prays for the baptism or outpouring of the Holy Spirit after it is preached. But that the gospel as

it is, embracing the grand triune truth; the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, when preached in its fulness, is the power of God to save us. The passage in the beginning of the epistle contains the motive power, the gospel of Christ, and one of the immediate results, faith. For the sake of clearness, we will correct it with a declaration recorded near the end of the epistle. "Now to him that is of power to establish you, according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandments of the everlasting God, made know to all nations for the obedience of faith" (Rom. xvi. 25, 26). Why was the gospel preached? In order to the obedience of faith. What is the obedience of faith? Is it "to get religion," "to get saved," or to get a "baptism of power"? Neither; for a man does not obey what he gets, he enjoys it. Such a thing as getting religion is neither expressed nor implied in the Bible. These two passages embrace four distinct propositions, and no sophistry can confound them. (1) The gospel of Christ. (2) Making the gospel known. (3) Believing the gospel; or, in other words, believing in Jesus Christ. (4) Obedience to the gospel. "The faith" of which Jude, the apostle, wrote covers these four propositions. The gospel includes the facts of the life, death and resurrection of Christ, and the commands which he gave to the apostles. To believe the gospel is to accept it with "all the heart" on the authority of the apostles of Christ. Faith comes, remains, increases, becomes strong, "groweth exceedingly" (II. Thess. i. 1), by hearing and reading and meditating upon the word of God (John xx. 30, 31; Rom. x. 17). Why are men required to obey

the gospel? In order to freedom from sin. "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you; being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Rom. vi. 16–18).

The gospel of Christ, the faith once delivered to the saints, or the word of reconciliation, takes hold of a man where it finds him. When Jesus sent the apostles out to preach or teach the truth, the world lay in wickedness and condemnation. Was the gospel they preached enough to cleanse the people and make them free? No one doubts it. Then the same system is enough to save the world. When the heathen jailer was awakened out of sleep by the earthquake that shook the foundations of the prison, he inquired what to do to be saved, and he was told to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; but the preachers did not stop there. They "spake unto him the word of the Lord and to all that were in his house." He obeyed the gospel "the same hour of the night" (Acts xvi. 25-34). There is nothing said about repentance, but "the word of the Lord" comprehends it all and his life afterward shows conclusively that he did repent. The same question was asked by thousands on the day of Pentecost. They were told to "repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins," with the promise, "ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts ii. 38). Not a word was said about faith or belief, because those who asked the question had already believed and they were commanded to do the

next thing to them. Saul of Tarsus desired to know the way (Acts ix. 6), and the Lord sent him to Damascus to a preacher; for the word of reconciliation had been given to men, and the Author of life would not supersede the authority of the apostles. The disciple Ananias went to him and told him to arise and be baptized and wash away his sins (Acts xxii. 16). He did not say anything about the death of Christ or his resurrection or his glory. Why not? Because Saul knew these facts. Nothing was said about faith or repentance. Why not? Because he had both believed and repented. What did he lack? Baptism and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Here is another example: "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized" (Acts xviii. 8). How does this correspond with the great commission? "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Matt. xvi. 15, 16). In what way and for what purpose were they baptized? "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into his death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (Rom. vi. 3–5). For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (I. Cor. xii. 13). "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. iii. 17). "The like figure

whereunto even baptism doth now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (I. Pet. iii. 21).

Do you still doubt? Are you still undecided? Do you still ask for more? Are you still unwilling to rely upon those who spoke by the authority of Christ? The testimony is practically inexhaustible. Can a man be born again unless he is begotten anew? "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures" (Jas. i. 18). "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, ye have not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus have I begotten you through the gospel" (I. Cor. iv. 15). "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently; being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; but the word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the word which by the apostles is preached unto you" (I. Pet. i. 22–25). Do you sigh for freedom from sin? "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John viii. 31, 32). "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls; but be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his

natural face in a glass; for he beholdeth himself and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was; but whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his doing" (Jas. i. 21–24). Do you want life? "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto, they are spirit and they are life" (John vi. 63). "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. viii. 2). Do you desire to be wise in the sight of Christ? "Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock" (Matt. vii. 24). Do you want to be sanctified? "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth" (John xvii. 17). Do you desire to be cleansed? "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John xv. 3). Do you want to enter into the kingdom? "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. vii. 21). Do you desire to believe in Christ and be one with him and his people? "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me"

(John xvii. 20–23). "But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John xx. 31). The Bereans "were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so; therefore many of them believed" (Acts xvii. 11, 12). "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. x. 17). Do you want to grow in grace? "As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (I. Pet. ii. 3). "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord" (II. Pet. i. 2). "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II. Pet. iii. 18). "And now brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified" (Acts xx. 32). Do you desire weapons for your warfare? "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II. Cor. x. 4, 5). "The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. vi. 17). "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword" (Heb. iv. 12). Do you want to be converted? "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple" (Ps. xix. 7). Do you want to be kept from sin? "Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I should not sin against thee" (Ps.

cxix. 11). Do you want to be quickened into a better life? "Quicken thou me according to thy word" (Ps. cxix. 25). Do you want to help save the world? "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee" (I. Tim. iii. 15, 16). Do you want light and understanding? "The entrance of thy words giveth light, it giveth understanding to the simple" (Ps. cxix. 130). Do you ask for more than this? I am clear; the truth will not reach you. I leave you to your doom, for you would not believe if the apostles would arise from the dead! God pity your lost condition!

Thus far nothing has been said concerning prayer, "calling on the name of the Lord." Please do not come to the conclusion that I do not believe in it, for nothing could be further from the truth. I do not believe that prayer, pure and simple, will do any one any good. The modern theory of conversion nullifies the conditions of the gospel and makes salvation dependent on the prayers of the sinner and the prayers of the church. I do not accept this, do not believe a word of it. Do you ask why? Because the system is an invention of man, from one end to the other. This seems hard. I assure you I dislike to say it, but when men's souls are at stake we can not afford to evade, or even use soft words if hard ones are necessary to drive the truth home to the mind and conscience. Did the apostles practice such a system? They did not; it is the child of the great apostasy. Why are so many men ignorant of the word of God? Because they think they can secure any blessing by asking for it, whether it is promised or not. Why are there so many consummate

scoundrels in the church? Because the system under which they live disregards the Bible and assures its advocates that they can get anything by asking for it. Hence, they lie, defraud, indulge in all manners of wickedness during the day and pray down forgiveness at night and retire to rest "spotless, clean and white"! This is repeated from day to day through life, and if the man has time to pray when he is called, God is too good to damn him! Could anything be farther from the teaching of the Bible? I affirm in all sincerity, and with the deepest reverence of my heart, that such prayers can not be answered! God can not, and will not deny his word.

What does the Bible say about it? Saul of Tarsus was commanded to be baptized, "calling on the name of the Lord." This key unlocks the secret. We must do the will of God, calling on his name. Work and pray, pray and work. Keep right on; there is no place to stop this side of heaven. After this man became an apostle he wrote: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! but they have not all obeyed the gospel, for Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report" (Rom. x. 13–16). Does the Bible limit the blessing of God to the obedient, to those who accept the "word of reconciliation"? "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination" (Prov. xxviii. 9). "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his com-

mandments and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" (1. John iii. 22). "Now we know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshiper of God and doeth his will, him he heareth" (John ix. 31). Do you say these words were spoken by a man? I can not deny it, but the apostle gives them his unqualified approval. If this man spoke that which is false, why did John not say so?

I do not believe in prayer alone or obedience alone. The Bible does not approve either. No man was saved in apostolic times excepting through obedience to the gospel of Christ, but that obedience embraced, and I say it most earnestly and emphatically, calling upon or invoking the name of the Lord, the presence of the Lord. Prayer is the vital breath of Christian living, yet we must mix faith and good works with our petitions to "the throne of grace." But you, whether saint or sinner, may live and die on your knees and miss heaven at last, unless you also "keep his commandments and do those things that are well-pleasing in his sight."

All the works of God, in creation, in providence, and redemption, are complete. The promise which he made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was complete in itself, and did not need any outside power, or additional power to make it effective. The law of Moses was inherently what God intended it to be. The gospel is the fulness of God's power, plan and willingness to save. It is, therefore, complete in itself. Does God impart additional power to the sun-ray to make it warm and light? Of course not. The sun-ray is both heat and light according to his design in creation. Did he send the Holy Spirit to the patriarchs to enable them to understand the promise? Did he baptize the Jews with his Spirit, in

order to enable them to understand the law of Moses? Such a procedure would imply that he was unable to make a promise or a law that would accomplish his purpose. Does he impart his Spirit to the world outside of the gospel? If so, where is the proof? If the gospel is not sufficient in itself to save men, it is incomplete; more than this, it is a failure and nothing but a failure!

It is impossible to separate God and the Spirit of God, either in fact or in the mind of an intelligent Christian, for God is a Spirit (John iv. 24). God was in the promise, he was in the law, he is in "the faith which was once delivered to the saints," he is in his people, he is in all of his works. He imparted supernatural power to the prophets and apostles, and as they were only agents in his hands, "the great power of God" was imparted to their words, the word of God. The New Testament is full of God, full of the Holy Spirit, full of Jesus Christ. Could you put more into it? When you accept the gospel you have something you can understand, something to instruct you, something to guide you, something on which you can safely depend, and planting your faith down deep in the truth, the revelation of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit, with your eyes upon the cross, you can rest in the grace of God that has brought salvation and perfect security for this life and bright hopes for that which lies beyond the mystic river and the pearly gates in the everlasting kingdom of Jesus Christ.

SERMON VI.

THE NEW BIRTH.

TEXT: "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (John iii. 7).

Every event, every fact, every lesson in the Bible, is directly associated with men. It is a book of divine power and human salvation. Its important events are so closely connected with men that you can not think of one without the other. Thus: Abraham and the promise; Moses and the law; Elijah and the prophets of Baal; David and the Psalms; Peter, James and John and the transfiguration of Christ; Nicodemus and the new birth; Paul and the "thorn in the flesh"; John and the Revelation. Bless the Lord, it is our book.

Nicodemus was a representative of the Jewish religion and civilization. He was born under the law of Moses, was circumcised according to its demands, and was a "debtor to do the whole law" (Gal. v. 3). He was a member from birth of the old institution or church. He had a right that no man could destroy to all its privileges and many of its honors and blessings. He understood the principles of the covenant under which he lived, for he was a man of authority—"a ruler of the Jews." He came "unto Jesus by night" (John iii. 2). Why did he come by night? Doubtless for the same reason that will bolt the gates of the New Jerusa-

lem forever against many of this congregation—unbelief, respect for tradition, and the fear of men.

Out of reverence for the customs of Israel, and probably the conviction that "the man Christ Jesus" was more than man, he said: "Master, we know that thou art a teacher come from God." Observe the calm assurance that pervades this important concession. He did not use any doubtful terms, such as we believe, suspect or imagine, but he ascended at once to the highest plane of human experience, "we know." How did this Jew know that Jesus came from God? Listen, O ye doubters, infidels and indifferent aliens! "No man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him." Mark you, this is not the testimony of a disciple, but the acknowledgment of one who was totally ignorant of the Saviour's mission. It is not to be despised on that account. "These miracles"—the dead were raised to life again, the blind received their sight, and the lame walked, under his omnipotent touch (Matt. xi. 45)—these works introduced Jesus to men as superior to man, as one above nature. Who of the great and good men of past ages had brought such intelligent, such universal, such overwhelming evidences that he came from God? It is true that his pretensions were lofty—almost above human understanding; but he was "approved of God by miracles, wonders and signs" (Acts ii. 22) which the world could not equal nor contradict. "This thing was not done in a corner" (Acts xxvi. 26), but in open daylight, in the presence of the multitudes—the most enlightened and critical witnesses of the age in which he lived. How unlike the wonders and signs, the works of the devil, in modern times!

Here are the wisdom and divinity of Jesus. If he had been only a man he would have been flattered by this reference to his wonderful works; but, no, he came to save the lost, and the Jewish ruler is startled by the emphatic and unexpected declaration: "Verily, verily" —which means most assuredly—"I say unto thee, Except a man be born again he can not see the kingdom of God." When he had recovered from his surprise at these remarkable words of him who spake as "one having authority" (Matt. vii. 29), he replied: "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?" From the human standpoint this was a very hard question, but it shows an entire want of understanding of what Jesus said—of what he meant. He therefore enlarged the phrase "born again," "born anew," or "born from above," by saying: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God; that which is born of flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Nicodemus was silent, thoughtful, astonished. Jesus said: "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (John iii. 3–7).

A clear and comprehensive view of these passages will enable us to grasp the subject in all its details. First, Jesus told the Jewish ruler that he must be "born again" in order to "see the kingdom of God." He did not understand this, hence the Lord explained to him that to be born again meant to "be born of water and of the Spirit"; that to see the kingdom of God meant to "enter into the kingdom of God." This is clear enough for us, for we have the light of subsequent revelation. This explanation might have opened his

mind had he not, like many of our own times, been wedded to his own way of thinking; for he doubtless possessed some information concerning the preaching of John the Baptist, and the baptism of thousands of his countrymen and neighbors "in the river," yes in the river "of Jordan"! But he was blind. Oh, beware of the pride of birth, riches or tradition! These declarations undermined the entire Jewish system; for their highest idea of spiritual position or privilege was embraced in a birth of flesh of Hebrew parentage. Everything Nicodemus said indicated that he was proud of his birthright, his nation, his position. When Jesus began to talk of a new birth and a new kingdom he was surprised that any Jew would have the presumption to place anything above the Abrahamic covenant, and its legitimate outgrowth, the law of Moses; and after this protracted interview he doubtless returned to his duties as a ruler full of amazement and conflicting emotions.

Born again means born anew, born of the will of God, born from above, born of incorruptible seed, born of water and the Spirit. Has any man the right to detach one of these statements, remove it from its proper connection and build up a system upon it and promise men salvation through it? Right or no right, truth or no truth, salvation or no salvation, this is precisely what is done all around us, everywhere. We hear much of born again, born of the Spirit, or born anew, and but little of born of the will of God, born of water and the Spirit, or born of the word of God. Some men prefer the shadow to the substance; half truth to the whole truth and nothing but the truth. The truth in its fullness is too much for the faith, or rather the creeds, of some men; hence they neglect or

totally disregard the objectionable parts! There are too many educated consciences; consciences educated to systematically, wilfully neglect and reject the truth. Educated consciences are needed, but of a different kind. If the Christians of to-day would receive the truths of the Bible as the prophets, as Jesus Christ, as the apostles left them, a religious revolution would be the immediate and inevitable result, and out of the revolution would shine in its beauty the restored church of apostolic simplicity and purity.

The "Master in Israel" (John iii. 10) did not understand "these things," nor do many of us; but through the mists, the doubts, the uncertainties and contradictions of the modern exponents of the Bible we hear the voice of Jesus ringing loud and clear: "Ye must be born again." Can a man be born again and have no certain evidence of the fact? If so, we must live in doubt and die in doubt, and take our chances for heaven the same as if all religion were a myth, all faith fanaticism, all hope a delusion. If not, how transcendently important this occasion! How glorious the gospel of light, life and liberty! Where is the way? Jesus Christ. His word is the way. What is the new birth? It is the great change from darkness and sin to the kingdom of God. What does it embrace? Every fact, commandment and blessing of the law of Christ. What produces it, the gospel, or some power outside and above it? The gospel; or else the mission of Jesus does not accomplish the design of God in sending him to the world. What relation does the church sustain to the world touching this question? We can preach the gospel and urge men to accept and obey it, and we will not be guiltless if we fail. Is the sinner able to do anything, or is he helpless until after he is

born again? He must do his part or be damned, and if he refuses to do it he ought to be damned. He deserves nothing less. Do we know that we are in the kingdom of God? Yes. What is the evidence on which we rest? The promise and the oath of the almighty God (Heb. vi. 13). Could you ask for more?

This subject has been discussed over and over in almost every pulpit in the land, and yet the people "sit in darkness." Thousands are willing and anxious to be saved, but they candidly confess that they "know not the way." Who is to blame? Where does the responsibility lie? Who must answer for it in the judgment? Either the Bible, the preachers, or the people. The united voice of all believers exonorates the Bible from all blame, and lays the ax down at the feet of the people and the preachers. Slow, now. You must come up to the demands of the gospel of Christ either here or at the bar of God. Why not do it now? Why, vain and foolish man, do you "make void the law of Christ through your tradition" (Matt. xv. 13)? "Who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth" (Gal. iii. 1)? Why will you fight against God? Owing to the immense amount of ignorance, indifference and doubt existing in the minds of many concerning the new birth, I will try to prepare the way for a full discussion of the subject by showing what it is not, by clearing it of ambiguous or unnecessary terms, so that the issue may be plain to every mind. It is frequently a much lighter task to show what a thing is not than to show what it is; but by your indulgence and the help of the New Testament I shall endeavor to do both.

The new birth does not mean a second birth of flesh. The blood or flesh basis of divine acceptance was em-

phatically repudiated by Jesus Christ; hence the old covenant and the new covenant are distinct. The third chapter of John stands as an eternal contradiction of the theory that the two covenants (Gal. iv. 24) are the same, one, identical. The old covenant was entered by a birth of flesh. The new covenant is entered by a birth of water and the Spirit. If the two are identical, why did Jesus deny membership in the second to the Jews? They were all members of the first. In spite of the feelings of Nicodemus, and the supposed connection between the covenants, Jesus disclaimed any connection between them, and opened the door of his kingdom to the world.

The necessity for a new birth puts an everlasting quietus upon the doctrine of Universalism, the doctrine that all men, religious and irreligious, will find happiness in heaven. If a man "can not see the kingdom of God" unless he is born again, and if the new birth involves our volition, how can a man be saved who has never "passed from death unto life" (I. John iii. 14)? How can all men be the recipients of happiness, grand, glorious and eternal, when thousands "die in their sins" (John viii. 24)? How can a man harbor everything that is vile in his heart, die in this condition, and get to heaven, when no defilement can enter into it (Rev. xxi. 27)? The New Testament answer to this satanic scheme to lead men to destruction is pointed, emphatic and final: "Ye must be born again"!

Unconditional election and reprobation die before this doctrine like men drop before the sweep of a contagion. If some were predestinated, or foreordained, to everlasting life, and others to "everlasting shame and

contempt," why did Jesus not say so? Why did he not say: "The elect must be saved, born again"; or, "The elect will be born again"? Why did he not in some way allude to or imply the existence of these decrees? Do you think this was not the proper time and place? You are certainly mistaken in this, for he was making known, though in highly figurative language, the law of admission into his kingdom. The reason he did not refer to such decrees is—and I say it with all emphasis—that they did not exist. Nor do they exist now save in the clouded minds of fatalistic theologians and the musty volumes of antiquated speculation. But I have not so "learned Christ." Have you? If so, now is the time to begin anew.

Every passage in the Bible that lays stress on human accountability or implies that salvation is conditional, buries the abominable doctrine with the obsolete men and times that invented it. There is but one kingdom of God, city of refuge, or church for all the world. No man, it matters not who his parents are, can claim membership on the basis of natural fitness. It is entered by the new birth. All men in every age are equal before the law. One man can not enter in one way and some one else in another way. The Lord is no respecter of persons (Rom. ii. 11), and the gospel makes no discriminations. All men are sinners in the sight of God, and there is but one law of pardon for the world. Just so certain as all men have been born once—born of the flesh, born into this world—they have an opportunity to be born again—born into the kingdom of God.

The doctrine of the new birth does not justify the extravagant claims of many that they enjoy personal, direct and undoubted knowledge from God that their

sins have been forgiven. Revelation or no revelation, Bible or no Bible, law or no law, baptism or no baptism, obedience or no obedience, reason or no reason, they claim divine and infallible assurance of the forgiveness of sins. Is it right, is it scriptural, is it safe for a man to claim that he is the object of a special revelation; that is, a revelation that no one knows anything about but himself? If a special revelation is required to prove God's willingness to save, to each person, as many think, the general revelation—in other words, the New Testament—never did or never will save any one. Therefore the cross of Christ is a farce, the apostles were deceivers, and the conditions of the gospel imposed by them the product of human ignorance and despotism. Will God repudiate the word of salvation that cost the life-blood of Jesus Christ, and whisper peace in the souls of men who have never performed a single act of obedience to his law? Are there not revelations enough in the Bible to save you? Is your unbelief so great, your heart so hard, and your mind so corrupted that God must ignore the requirements of the gospel and inaugurate a new plan to reach you? Do you not treat God with disrespect and his word with contempt when you indulge in such pretensions? I do not deny that men are born from above, for this is plainly taught in the Scriptures; but before you make up your mind what this phrase means let me remind you that truth is from above, that Jesus came from above, and that the Holy Spirit, which guided the apostles into all truth—yes, all truth; not a part, but into the whole truth and nothing but the truth —came down from above to remain forever. What do you think of these passages? "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in

my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you" (John xiv. 26). "The things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you, with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven" (I. Pet. i. 12). "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (Jas. i. 17). God gives us everything we enjoy. Our daily bread comes from his benevolent hands. Yet we are commanded to pray for it (Matt. vi. 11), and to work with our hands (Eph. iv. 28). Because a thing is from above, from heaven, from God, does not necessarily imply that it comes directly from him, and that we have nothing to do. He gives us our daily bread when we work for it, and deliverance from sin when we seek it according to the appointments of his kingdom. If we refuse to work, starvation will be our just and inevitable portion. If we refuse to accept and live for Christ, we can never see his face in peace. There is no hope for the wilfully disobedient. Will God ignore the conditions of the gospel in order to save you simply because you ask him?

The eighth verse of the third chapter of John has been the source of much strife and confusion. Many have been kept out of the kingdom by the wild, unreasonable, sectarian interpretations of this passage. Let us give it a careful examination in the light of the New Testament and common sense. Please give attention to the reading: "The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." I can not deny that the passage is a very diffi-

cult one. For a long time I did not know what to do with it. That it contained an important divine truth I did not doubt, but what that truth was I did not know. The preachers and practices of the religious people around me increased the darkness. Their pretensions virtually said: "Away with faith and obedience. We get our religion directly from God!" Does this prove that the Saviour intentionally hid his meaning in impenetrable mystery for all time? I presume not. What then must or can be done? Attempt to discover its meaning. In what way? By appealing to the creeds and commentaries? No. Revise the passage. Give the Saviour's precise meaning. Do you think he meant to teach that the greatest question with which our minds can grapple is as unreliable, uncertain and changeable as the wind? I feel in the depths of my soul that I would be guilty of treason if I should make such an accusation against him. Jesus spoke Greek. Was he discussing the peculiarities of the wind or the great spiritual birth? What did he say in Greek? What would he have said if he had spoken our language? Do your translators give the correct meaning in our tongue of what Jesus said in Greek? If they did not, we have a right to appeal from their translation to the original. If they give the Saviour's meaning the passage is a profound mystery into whose depths we dare not plunge. There is no doubt that our translators erred, and that their work needs a very careful and close revision. What we want, what we demand, what we must have, is the truth; nothing more or less. It matters not who suffers, let us have the facts! No honest Christian can refuse such a demand as this, nor refuse to conscientiously abide by the results. The following, I think, gives a very good idea of what

Jesus said : " The Spirit breathes where he pleases, and you hear the sound of his voice, but you can not tell from whence he comes nor whither he goes ; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." We observe that the " Spirit breathes," or speaks, where he pleases. Nicodemus heard the sound of him, but he could not understand where it came from nor where it went. Indeed the whole drift of the Saviour's teaching was a mystery to him. Why did he not understand? Because he, in common with his countrymen and thousands of others through all the ages, was wedded to tradition, political pride and religious position.

The conclusion of the passage, " So is every one that is born of the Spirit," seems to be the most difficult. Truly it covers a multitude of mistakes. It is made responsible for the mysterious and uncertain element in modern religious society, and for the positive refusal of many to submit to plain commands of Christ. " So is," not shall be, " every one that is born of the Spirit." Did the good Master use this expression with reference to all ages and all nations, or to his own age and nation? Undeniably to his own. Did he use the phrase, " born of the Spirit," in a peculiar sense? He did not mean any more or less than born of the will of God, born of the incorruptible seed, born anew, born again, or born of water and the Spirit. Do you say it does? Where is the proof? What does your bare assertion amount to? Did you ever read the Bible through? Did you ever read the New Testament through? Did you ever read the Acts of the Apostles through? Have you read a chapter within a month? Are you not a nice witness concerning what a man must do to be saved? Shame and disgrace on the professions and pretensions of man!

We ought to study these great questions calmly, deliberately and honestly. Too many men imagine that every man, whether saint or sinner, bears the same relation to the Bible. They remind me of the sick man who took all his medicine at once, totally disregarding directions, because forsooth the physician said it was good for him. Let us consider the age in which this interview took place, and also the religious condition of the Jewish ruler. The times; the surrounding circumstances, religious, political and social; the peculiar conditions of men and nations, frequently give complexion to the divine message, for the word of God is adapted to man as it finds him. Every message from God to man is made in harmony with the developments of the age and wants of the people to whom it is sent. It is preëminently so in this passage. Jesus spoke in parables (Matt. xiii. 34, 35), and intentionally kept many things in the dark, for "the hour" (John xvii. 1) had not come. The time was before the crucifixion, under the law of Moses, during the great preparatory period, just before sunrise. The apostles themselves were profoundly and unconsciously ignorant of his mission and their own (Mark ix. 10; Matt. xviii. 1–5). The fullness of the kingdom had not yet come. Many of the sayings of Jesus were mysterious; but those who heard him and believed what they understood, and obeyed as far as they had opportunity, were born again, or born of the Father's will. Do you doubt it? Here is the proof: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not, but as many as received him, to them gave he power—that is, right or privilege—to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God"

(John i. 11–13). He came first to the Jews. Some of them received him; believed on his name. They were born or renewed by the will of God. They were renewed to the extent of their knowledge, but no further; yet, like Nicodemus, they did not and could not grasp the mission of Jesus in its fullness. With these thoughts clearly before us, is it not absurd in the extreme for us to ask, with the ignorant, self-righteous Jew: "How can these things be?" Again I ask, do this age and the lesson presented in harmony with its development, stand as a criterion for all ages? No, no; a thousand times, no!

There are many difficult passages in the prophets and in the sayings of Jesus, and they will remain so unless we permit the apostles to lead us into the light. If you love the abstruse, the mysterious, the incomprehensible, sever the parables of Jesus from their connection and build your hopes of heaven upon fanciful interpretations of that which you can not understand, and you will be abundantly gratified; but if you will place the hard passages of Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John under the light of Pentecost, the inauguration of the reign of Christ on earth, and the subsequent developments under the preaching of the apostles, they will become as bright as noonday. The New Testament is the revelation of God. The Old Testament contained certain manifestations of God. Therefore the New Testament is the revelation of the meaning of the Old Testament. It is also true that the life, the teaching, the parables, the promises, the sayings of Jesus were never understood until after his glorification at the Father's right hand, and the descent of the Spirit of Truth.

The gospel is a grand system of renovation, restoration, redemption, or renewal. Men heard the voice of God, and enjoyed its redeeming influences, for generations before Christ was born into the world; but their knowledge was limited and their conception of sin, salvation and immortality exceedingly crude. "So is every one that is born of the Spirit." The Saviour did not say: "So is every one that shall be born of the Spirit," for he well knew that the time would come when under the glorious light of the gospel every one would understand, yes, "know (Jer. xxxi. 34) the Lord," the Source of every blessing. Can you point to a single passage like this one, even in the remotest degree, after the day of Pentecost? Why did Jesus not use this language, or something like it, when telling the distressed and affrighted Saul of Tarsus what to do to be saved? Because the time had come to reveal "the mystery of God-likeness" and preach the gospel of peace to every creature (Mark xvi. 15, 16; Rom. xvi. 25, 26).

Did the apostles, who knew all things by the Holy Spirit, tell the people: "You can not tell from whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth"? Did they preach a sermon on the power, the mystery and the uncertainty of the wind, and inform them at the conclusion: "So is every one that is born of the Spirit"? They knew that the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father; came down from heaven (Acts ii. 33). There is no room for doubt now, for we have passed out of the twilight into the new morning; out of the parables into facts; out of the preparatory period into the fullness of the kingdom of God.

There is one feature of the new birth that is frequently overlooked. The phrase, "except a man," can

not be tortured into meaning, "except a baby." Yet some of the "sanctified" of the denominations so apply it. It is so applied by the creeds, and you can not deny it. Nor can it mean simply a man's heart, mind, life or body. It includes "a man," a whole man, a complete man—body, soul, heart, mind, life. Jesus Christ demands all we have and are. We need light just here. The modern revival is the outgrowth of the sentiment that supposes that only a man's heart is "born anew," hence the efforts to modify, explain away or ignore the birth of water—in plain words, baptism. Approved revivalists teach the sinner that feelings are the evidence of pardon. They ought to remember that only blind men depend upon feeling their way. Christians—genuine New-Testament Christians—"live by faith" (Rom. i. 17); "walk in the light" (I. John i. 7). If we were in darkness (I. Thess. v. 4) we would doubtless depend upon our feelings; but as we are not, we are responsible, not for our feelings, but for our acts. Their methods are contrary to "sound doctrine" (Ti. ii. 8) and common sense. Investigate them. Do they appeal to the judgment of the people; to their immortal nature? Nay, verily! They appeal to the emotional nature; depict deathbed scenes and earthly farewells. They teach the people that everything depends on the descent of the Holy Spirit; that if they can not get power from on high all will be in vain. Thrilling songs are sung. Prayers are offered that forcibly remind the Bible student of the dramatic scene depicted in the eighteenth chapter of II. Kings—Elijah and the prophets of Baal. The loud "amen" rings through the place. The confusion and excitement grow apace. In this condition men are hurried through the modern regenerating process. I ask in deepest candor,

is God the author of this babel? It will not improve the matter to take refuge behind the assertion that this is not the universal practice; for while the excitement is not so great in some localities, the theory is precisely the same; for the more moderate ones endeavor to pray pardon down from God, in defiance of the demands of the gospel, and thousands, millions pass through and claim to enjoy pardon when they have not the least conception of the law of pardon submitted to the world through the apostles. After man passes through these scenes—scenes in which the animal nature often predominates—his religious zeal passes like a cloud away, and he begins to doubt. His religious teachers console him by quoting that passage about he wind, placing great emphasis on the part which says: "Thou canst not tell from whence it cometh nor whither it goeth." This is true of thousands of the mourner's-bench converts, for when they "get it"—such nonsense!—they do not know where it comes from, and when they "lose it" they can not tell where it is gone. Is it any wonder that skepticism and religious indifference prevail in the land?

No one can deny that the new birth involves our happiness here and hereafter. Yet the space devoted to it in the New Testament is exceedingly small. It is mentioned in two different chapters by John, and once by the apostle of the Gentiles, Paul. That it is important no one can doubt. Then why these brief and unsatisfactory allusions? Either the New Testament writers were culpably negligent, or other parts of the book throw light upon the subject besides the places in which it is mentioned. I think the latter is decidedly the correct conclusion.

The words of Jesus, to which reference has been made, declare that men are born of the will of God. This is the golden key that unlocks the treasures of wisdom, knowledge and redemption. The will of God was gradually unfolded to men as the centuries passed into the shadowy land of history. It was never completed until the apostles preached the gospel, "with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven," in Jerusalem and among the Gentiles (Isaiah ii. 2, 3; Luke xxiv. 45–53). Whoever received the messages of heaven as the light of God, as the light for the age in which he lived, was most assuredly renewed, restored or redeemed. Keep this in mind, but do not draw the unwarranted conclusion that the new birth, or salvation, of other times was as radical, full and complete as it is under the new dispensation. Here is an apostle's version of the matter. Will you accept it? "Being born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, the word of God that liveth and abideth forever" (I. Pet. i. 23). Jesus Christ spoke in anticipation of the conquest of the world through the gospel after his death, burial, resurrection and glorification. Nothing was plain, not even to the apostles (Acts i. 6–8), until the Holy Spirit came down (Acts ii. 1–5). When Peter said, we are born of the incorruptible seed, he simply explained, under the direction of the Spirit of Truth, what Jesus said to Nicodemus. Born of the word and born of the water and the Spirit mean precisely the same. You can not separate them. I hope you will not try to do so.

The word of God is the seed of the kingdom (Matt. xiii. 1–23). The kingdom is entered by the birth of water and the Spirit. Therefore the seed, the word of truth, the obedience of faith and the new birth, are

inseparable. Those who understand the word (Matt. xiii. 23), receive it (Mark iv. 20), keep it in good and honest hearts, are the recipients of all the blessings of God. Can a man be born again without the Holy Spirit? No, for the Spirit inspires the word (Matt. x. 20; II. Tim. iii. 14–17). Can a man be born again, or become a child of God, without the seed of the kingdom? Can a man raise wheat or corn without seed? Can you fight without a sword (Eph. vi. 17)? Can a man be saved, be a Christian, and ignore the law of heaven (I. Thess. i. 6–10)? Can a man get to heaven by his own way (Matt. viii. 13)?

What is it to be born of the word of God? Simply to hear, believe and obey the gospel of Christ; for the cross of Christ put a motive power into everything that he said before he suffered. Will you answer this question in the presence of God? If I believe every fact, and obey every command in the gospel, will I be saved? You can not question it, can you? A man can not be saved unless he is born again; born of water and the Spirit. What then? Faith and obedience constitute the new birth, according to your own admission. When I say faith and obedience constitute the new birth, I mean faith in Christ, not faith in creeds; obedience to the gospel, full and willing obedience, not obedience to men. You can not be half born of half of the gospel. Neither can you give two-thirds of the glory to men and one-third of the glory to God. All or none, is the will of God. You can not take half of the facts, half of the commands, turn from half of your sins, and substitute man's way—a few drops of water, for born of water—and be accepted of God. The divine demand is all! all! all! The time is now! now! now!

There is no escape from these conclusions. You can not fall back on the fact that your parents dedicated you to God in your infancy. You must dedicate yourself to him by a complete and unconditional surrender to his demands. This surrender includes a birth of water, a burial and resurrection (Eph. iv. 5; Rom. vi. 4), if God's will can be expressed in human language. This is a personal matter, and it carries with it the weight and solemnity of eternal years. With emphasis—solemn, deep and soul-stirring—Jesus says to you! you! "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit he can not enter into the kingdom of God." Will he deny these words, or repeal them, to let you into the kingdom? Ah! This is an awful question. Will you decide for the truth? In deepest pity and love, Jesus Christ proclaims to you, to us, to the world: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. xi. 28).

SERMON VII.

CONVERSION.

TEXT: "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xviii. 3).

These are among the most remarkable words ever uttered by the Redeemer, and they were spoken under very peculiar circumstances. His life and labors on earth were rapidly approaching their end. The cross and the weight of the world's redemption were growing nearer day by day. His disciples, who had forsaken their homes and their callings and followed him steadfastly, obediently, perseveringly, during his ministry, were engaged in an earnest discussion of the kingdom of heaven. They had been the objects of his special care. It was their privilege to understand, "to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xiii. 11). He had spoken to them in the solitude of the mountain and in the noise of the city, and had carefully explained everything to them in the rest of the eventide, or in the stillness of the night. Notwithstanding these superior opportunities, they were yet ignorant of the real design of his mission in the world. They were therefore disputing concerning the positions of honor which they hoped to receive in the coming kingdom (Mark ix. 33–35). They could not agree among themselves, hence their appeal to the Master: "Who is the greatest in the

kingdom of heaven?" Astonishing weakness! Inexcusable ignorance! Yes, all of this and more; but it is not so surprising when we consider that they had entirely misunderstood the teaching of Jesus. He meant one thing; they expected another. He told them of a kingdom that was not to come with "outward show," but they did not understand him, and as they had dreamed of the temporal restoration of Israel, they desired to escort him into Jerusalem amidst the shouts of the multitude, place the glittering diadem of universal authority upon his brow, the scepter of peace and prosperity in his hands, and rend the very heavens with the shout of victory: "The son of David reigneth!"

Did Jesus reply to their question? Yes. How did he do it? He called a little child unto him. Why did he call the child? In order to teach the disciples a lesson that they would never forget. This is a striking picture. The disciples stand around in blank amazement. Their countenances plainly ask: What has this child to do with the kingdom of heaven or our question? They look at the child and then at Jesus. In every lineament of his face they see manifestations of love, mercy and sympathy. His lips are motionless. He looks steadfastly into the faces of the disciples. Their astonishment increases until their hearts almost cease to beat. Their minds are fixed, and as quietly as the morning sun chases away the gloom of night, and yet with an emphasis that rings through all the years, he utters the true and startling proposition: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven"! Unexpected rebuke! Terrible message! Wonderful transformation! Inexhaustible

words! Yet no truer words ever fell from the consecrated lips of love and mercy.

What is conversion? What produces conversion? How many propositions does the term conversion cover? Are men converted by a direct power from God, or through the gospel of Christ? Is the modern "mourner's bench," or "anxious-seat," process of conversion authorized by the word of God? If not, what will be "the end" of the men who practice and perpetuate it? Is the sinner passive or active in conversion? How can a man know that he has been converted? Does conversion bring a m n into the Church of Christ, or leave him out in the world? What is it to become as little children? What is the kingdom of heaven? What is the character of its citizens? Can a man be a Christian, or a child of God, outside of this kingdom? Is this kingdom divided against itself? Is there more than one way of conversion?

It is astonishing, but it is true nevertheless, that the salvation of the world depends upon the meaning of one word, the word converted; for those who have been converted are in the kingdom of Christ, and those who have never been converted are not in the kingdom; and those who are in the kingdom of Christ are saved, and those who are not are lost. You may consider this an uncharitable view; but I am in good company, for it is no more uncharitable than the plain declaration of Christ. What does the word mean? I can not, I dare not, submit an opinion, for too much is involved, and the responsibility is therefore too great. I am willing to submit the whole question to the Bible. What did Jesus mean? This is what we must determine. Does the Bible explain the text? If not, it can not be done. It does not matter

how logical your explanation may appear, if it does not correspond with the word of God it is inconsistent, contradictory and dangerous in the extreme. The Bible explains or defines the word conversion, and therefore unlocks the Saviour's meaning. How many times does the word, in its different forms, occur in the Bible? Do the passages in which it is found throw any light on the subject? Are you ready to hear the truth? Are you willing to abide by its decisions? "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting [restoring] the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple" (Ps. xix. 7). "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit; then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee" (Ps. li. 12, 13). "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke xxii. 32). "But those things which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled; repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts iii. 18, 19). "Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: for the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Acts xxviii. 26, 27). "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth and one convert him, let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (Jas. v. 19, 20). "Declaring the conversion of the Gentiles" (Acts xv. 3). Here are five words, con-

vert, converted, converting, converteth, conversion. Convert is the primitive, or first word, and all the others grow out of it. It therefore controls the meaning of all the others. Converted implies an action past, completed. Converting implies an action in process of completion. Converteth implies the agency by which the work is done. Conversion describes the work when it is finished. The quotations which I have introduced bring out some important facts: (1) Conversion is equivalent to restoration. (2) Teaching or preaching invariably precedes conversion. (3) Sinners are converted from sin. (4) They are converted to the truth, to Christ, to God. (5) Converting power enters into the heart through the ears, the eye, the mind. (6) Men can resist the converting power, and therefore become responsible for their own destruction. (7) Men are active; that is, they can do something in order to their conversion. (8) Conversion includes the whole man; body, soul, heart, mind, life. (9) Men are the agents by which God proposes to convert the world. (10) Conversion is that which is done in us through the truth. (11) Healing, forgiveness or pardon is the act of God.

The word conversion is a very simple word. We speak of converting money into clothing, or clothing into money; or converting water into steam, or the trees of the forests into houses. What do we mean by this? Simply that we change a thing from one use to another. Does conversion, when applied to sinners, mean any more than this? If the Saviour had lived in our day, what word would he have used to express the stinging rebuke to the worldly-minded disciples? Undoubtedly the word turn. The thought is not simply "be turned," but "turn yourselves," or "turn again." The Saviour did not

simply tell them to "be converted," but to turn from their evil thoughts. This idea brings out the personal accountability. God does not turn us. He gives us the truth and commands us to turn ourselves. You can grasp this, I am sure, for there in nothing abstruse or mysterious connected with it. Indeed, you can not misunderstand it if you try. A man is on the broad road to destruction. He is a sinner in the sight of God. He is "dead in trespasses and in sins." The gospel calls him; he stops, turns, obeys the Lord. Is he converted? Is he turned? Is he changed? Is he a child of God? Is he saved from his past sins? Is he a member of the church of Christ? Did he do anything toward his conversion? If these questions, without exception, can not be answered in the affirmative, the apostles of Jesus Christ lived and died without the knowledge of the truth! Do you say this is merely an opinion? Do you ask for the proof? Proof of what? That conversion is no more nor less than turning from sin to God? Here it is. The Bible is full of it. "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near." How do we seek the Lord? How do we call upon him? The next verse answers very plainly: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah lv. 6, 7). The prophet makes a very clear distinction between forsaking sin and pardon. The wicked man, under the power of divine truth, must forsake his way, his thoughts, and return to the Lord. This is all he can do. Pardon or forgiveness is the work of God. He can and will "abundantly pardon." "Amend your ways and your doings" (Jer. vii. 3). Could any-

thing be plainer than this? Could the Lord have made our duty plainer if he had exhausted all the vocabularies of earth? "Cast away from you all of your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye" (Ezek. xviii. 31, 32). It is one thing to turn from sin, and another to "do that which is lawful and right." Many are willing to turn from part of their sins, and keep part of the statutes of the Lord. Such people will never "see the kingdom of God." Are you willing to turn from all your transgressions, and keep all the requirements of the Lord? Are you willing to do your part and trust the Lord for the forgiveness of your sins? "Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts" (Mal. iii. 7). This is a fair proposition. Will you accept it? If not, why not? Here is an opportunity to test the promise of the Lord. Will you do it? "Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you" (Jas. iv. 8). Men have grown exceedingly wise since the apostolic times. In those days men drew nigh; returned to God by believing and obeying his will. Now they reverse the order and ask God to "come down" to them. Do you deny it? You can not, because the practice is almost universal, and the custom prevails to such an extent that a man can not be ignorant of its existence even if he desires to be.

What did Jesus mean by the phrase, "as little children"? Did he mean that we are to become little children in age and stature? Nothing could be further from

his meaning. "As little children" means like little children. What are the chief characteristics of the little child? It is innocent. It neither sins nor desires to sin. It is teachable, thirsty for information, ready to receive instruction. It is trustful; ready to believe and act. It is obedient; willing and ready to respect parental authority. Jesus therefore said in fact: "Except ye turn and become innocent, teachable, trustful and obedient as a little child ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." I can not lay too much stress on the necessity of forsaking every sin. Too many men make the start for heaven and fall by the way. Why is this? Their conversion was not deep enough, full enough, radical enough. If the dregs of sin remain in the heart they will soon manifest themselves in the life. You can not reach heaven and harbor malice, guile, envy or hypocrisy in your heart. These things are utterly incompatible with the Spirit of Christ, hence they can not dwell together. Are you at this moment as innocent of the desire to sin as the little child? If not, you are not a child of God. Are you teachable? Show me a man who professes to know everything about the Bible and I will show you a consummate hypocrite! Are you thirsting for information concerning the kingdom of Christ? If you can not learn something from the humblest of the creatures of God, you are too proud to be a Christian. Do you read the Bible regularly? If you do not, it is evident that you do not believe it. Do you search the Scriptures? If not you will never find anything that will help you. Do you study the word of God? Do you meditate upon it? Is it your spiritual food? Are you trusting in Christ? Do you really believe the Bible? Do you believe it with all your heart? Do

you obey it? Do you obey it all? Do you reject a part? Do you put your opinion in opposition to the word of God? Are you proud, envious, boastful, vainglorious? Will you "curse God and die"? Why not turn and live?

Conversion makes a man like a little child, and he begins the Christian life humble, submissive, ready to do right; and he never grows out of this humble disposition. He is required to grow in knowledge and grace, but the older and wiser he becomes the more he becomes like his Lord and Master. The New Testament clearly teaches that conversion makes a man a babe in Christ: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying and strife and division, are ye not carnal, and walk as men" (I. Cor. iii. 1–4)? "Wherefore, laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil-speakings, as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious" (I. Pet. ii. 1–4). "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. v. 12–14). "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven

for his name's sake" (I. John ii. 12). "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come into the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. iv. 11–17). "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II. Pet. iii. 18). Why were some of the brethren in apostolic times condemned for their carnality? Because there were envyings, strife and divisions among them. Why were they in this condition? Because they had not received the "sincere milk of the word" in order that they might grow out of this spiritual babyhood. Conversion makes a man a babe in Christ, and not a full-grown, matured or developed Christian, and if he refuses to receive the sincere milk of the word and grow, he very naturally drifts back into sin, falls from his "own steadfastness" (II. Pet. iii. 17). The supposition that when men are converted they become full-grown members of the body of Christ is the very essence of delusion. Why are men required to grow in knowledge and grace? Because it is impos-

sible for an alien to learn everything before he enters into the remission of sins. Which requires the greater amount of labor, planting a crop or cultivating and gathering the matured grain? Which is the greater achievement, learning the alphabet or obtaining an education afterward? Which involves the greater amount of danger, enlistment or the subsequent perils of the war? Which involves the greater amount of labor, hearing, believing and obeying the gospel for the remission of sins that are past (Rom. iii. 25), or steadfast continuance in well-doing unto the end of life? The latter, most decidedly. Hence the gradual growth from childhood to maturity in Christian faith and living. The divine order is: (1) The gospel. (2) Preaching. (3) Hearing. (4) Turning from sin. (5) Baptism. (6) Admission into the kingdom of heaven or the church of Christ. (7) Spiritual childhood. (8) Growth or faithful application to duty at all times.

What part of a man is changed in conversion? Unquestionably every part that has been alienated from God through sin. The conversion required by the New Testament turns the whole man to God. This is a very important part of the subject, and as the heart is the center of our being I will begin with it. Is the heart of a wicked man corrupt? Is it the throne of God? Does he love God? "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it" (Jer. xvii. 9)? "An evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things" (Matt. xii. 35). Paul drew this picture of the wickedness of many nations before Christ came into the world, and it is just as true of millions to-day: "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a mind devoid

of judgment, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful, who, knowing the judgment of God that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (Rom. i. 28–32). Man is alienated from God in mind, in thought: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are my ways your ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah lv. 8, 9). "The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord; but the words of the pure are pleasant words" (Prov. xv. 26). Man is alienated from God by wicked acts. "They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy, there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Ps. xiv. 3). Man is alienated from the family of God. "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 23).

"O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee" (Jer. iv. 14)? "Make you a new heart and a new spirit" (Eze. xviii. 31). "The thoughts of the righteous are right" (Prov. xii. 5). Conversion turns the heart; makes it new. In what

way? "Purify your hearts, ye double-minded" (Jas. iv. 8). "Purifying their hearts by faith" (Acts xv. 9). The sinner loves sin; he must learn to love the Lord. He fills his heart with wickedness; he must learn to "hunger and thirst after righteousness" (Matt. v. 6), and be filled with the Spirit of Christ (Eph. v. 18). Faith changes or makes new the heart. God (Eze. xxxvi. 26) gives us new hearts because he gives us the means by which they are cleansed. We purify our own hearts because we accept Jesus, and he crowds out all impurities or sins. Repentance is a change of mind. A change of mind is followed by a change of thought; that is, the method of thinking. A change of thought is followed by a change of life, or, to put it in stronger language, a reformation of life. Baptism changes the state. We are baptized "into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. xxviii. 19). We are baptized "into the remission of sins" (Acts. ii. 38). We are baptized into the death of Christ (Rom. vi. 3). We are baptized into the one body, church, or kingdom of Christ (I. Cor. xii. 13). We put on Christ by baptism (Gal. iii. 27). If a man can be converted, or turned to God, according to the gospel, without baptism, he can be converted or turned to God without being "in the name" of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; without being in Christ; without being in the church; or, without obedience (Acts x. 48). "The obedience of faith" adopts us into the family of God, and therefore gives us the Spirit of God. "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs—heirs of

God, and joint heirs with Christ" (Rom. viii. 15–17). "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. iv. 6). What is the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of adoption, and how does it manifest itself? The prophet, when referring to the coming of Jesus into the world, said: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots; and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord" (Isaiah xi. 1, 2). The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law" (Gal. v. 22, 23). You can take hold of this. You can understand and retain it. Can a man whose heart is full of corruption, whose mind is full of wicked thoughts, whose life is consecrated to selfish ends, claim the gift and presence of the Spirit of Christ? Never! Only the pure can dwell together.

What produces conversion? There are two answers to this question: (1) It is the result of hearing, believing and obeying the gospel of Christ. (2) It is the result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon sinners. Is the sinner active or passive in conversion? There are also two answers to this question: (1) He is active. (2) He is not. These two propositions are as far apart as heaven and earth, and one or the other of them is false. If men are converted to God through the gospel of Christ, as it is found in the New Testament, the theory of the direct work of the Spirit upon the sinner's heart is the invention of ignorant or deluded men. If the Holy Spirit, independent of the "power of the cross,"

turns men to God, what use have we for the gospel of Christ? If the sinner is passive in conversion, if he can not do anything to save himself, who will be responsible for the destruction of those who are not saved? The advocates of the theory of direct spiritual agency declare that the sinner is helpless, and that he can not do anything in order to his salvation. Sin has "bound him hand and foot," and he is just as helpless as a dead man! There he is! What will the Lord do with him? Save him? If so, according to his word, he will save everybody! Surely the advocates of the mourner's bench, or anxious-seat, are the most inconsistent people on the face of the earth. They proclaim to the people that they can not do anything to save themselves, and yet they call them to "the altar," where they pray and agonize for days, weeks, months, and even years! Some profess to have "received a change," while others live and die out of Christ. Where does the responsibility lie? Who is to blame? The preachers! Woe! woe! woe! to the blind guides.

The gospel of Christ as it is, is sufficient to save the world. Will you receive it and obey it? Do you doubt it? Jesus Christ said: "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man," this includes you, "will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself" (John vii. 16, 17). Are you lost? Jesus Christ came to save the lost. Are you a sinner? Jesus Christ came to call sinners to repentance. He is calling you; calling you now. O! turn, for why will you die? O! will you not come to him, enter his kingdom, now? There is but one plan of salvation or one kingdom of Christ. Will you close your eyes, stop your ears, and harden your heart against

the truth? The door is open now. Soon it will be closed forever, and your doom will be sealed. Why, why, O, why will you die?

SERMON VIII.

THE LIKENESS AND IMAGE OF GOD.

TEXT: "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts ii. 37).

The Bible submits to our consideration five great propositions: (1) God created man in his own likeness and image. (2) Man sinned, and the likeness of God within him was corrupted. (3) God has devised and revealed a plan to reinstate himself in the minds of men. (4) The scheme of redemption is adapted to our wants, sufficiently in itself to enlighten and convert the world. (5) God approaches man through his ears and eyes; his understanding.

There is not an intelligent, and therefore accountable, person on earth who has not at some time asked himself four great questions: Who made me? What relation do I sustain to him? What is my condition? Where will I spend the hereafter? The Bible is the only book in the world that proposes to answer these questions. In fact, it is the only book that can answer them. I exist. I am here. I think. I act. I hope. This hand has painted the pictures, built the ships, the bridges, the railroads, the pyramids, of the world. These eyes photograph all nature, and mind directs the commerce of the world, explores the earth, and penetrates the secret chambers of the Most High. Where

did I originate? Why was I created? Am I in any respect like my Creator? Am I immortal, or will my existence end with death? Are my body and mind one? Does my body think, or is it the servant of the thinking man within? You can not answer these questions. The Bible can. Will you hear it? "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen. i. 26, 27). "What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the Son of Man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor" (Ps. viii. 4, 5). Man was "made after the similitude of God" (Jas. iii. 9). He is a double being, composed of two distinct elements: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life: and man became a living soul" (Gen. iii. 7). "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (Eccles. xii. 7). "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (II. Cor. v. 1). "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man" (Rom. vii. 22). "But the natural man," the body, flesh, blood, "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness," flesh and bones can not think, "unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I. Cor. ii. 14). "With the mind I myself serve the law of God;

but with the flesh the law of sin" (Rom. vii. 25). "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day" (II. Cor. iv. 16). "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. iii. 3). "The hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is, in the sight of God, of great price" (I. Pet. iii. 4). "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. iv. 23). We have here a number of expressions that prove conclusively that there is more of me than my body: "Natural man," "outward man," "this tabernacle," "heart," "mind," "spirit," "inward man," "that which is not corruptible." The first three refer to my material organization; the others to something that is immaterial, and therefore invisible. I! Do you grasp it? I am! Can you understand it? I shall be for evermore! Do you believe it? The body is mortal; the mind is immortal. Man is a little world in himself. "I" am the center; the body is the circumference. "I" am the king; my body is the "palace royal." "I," or mind, represents our individuality, or independent existence; our distinct personality. Is man wholly mortal? If so, what is that principle that diversifies character; makes one man a poet, another an orator, another a mathematician, another a mechanic? What is that within us that is never satisfied, never full, never at rest? What is that which bursts through the gates of the physical prison and reaches out after the everlasting, the unseen, the unknown? Whence this wonderful machine, this ceaseless activity, this insatiable thirst for immortality? They are the products of "the likeness" of

God that is within us, the indestructible mind. Man was created both in the image and likeness of his Maker. Did he lose the likeness of God when he sinned? Yes, in a great degree, but it is impossible to destroy it entirely, for it is woven into the constitution of man; and there is not a tribe of people on earth, however ignorant, corrupt, or degraded, that does not possess some idea of a supernatural and all-wise Creator. Some men are so corrupt that they do not respect conscience; but all men fear God or dread the future. Man can not get away from the thought that there is a God.

The statement that man was made in the "likeness and image" of God contains some very important lessons. What is meant by the image and likeness of God? That man is like God. Is man able to think? God gave him this power in the creation. Is man able to reason? This ability is inherent in his nature; the gift of God. Is man capable of decision? This is a part of the likeness of God imparted at the beginning. Is he capable of loving? Love is of God. Did man maintain his unity with God? He did not. Why not? He sinned, or rebelled against God, and was condemned to labor, suffer and die. Did his heart remain pure? Did he continue uncorrupted in mind? Did he live at peace with God and himself? Was his mind still the image and likeness of his Maker? Was he free from sin? No, he began to wander away, and the farther he wandered from the Lord the less of his likeness he possessed. He crowded God out of his heart and mind by perverting his nature, by filling himself with lust, hatred, malice, hypocrisy, envy, uncleanness, idolatry, deception, wrath, superstition, ignorance, pride, ambition, rebellion, selfishness, and the love of this world. As the "thick dark-

ness" of ignorance and superstition settled down upon his mind the light of heaven faded away. Step by step he wandered away from God until the likeness of God was so corrupted, so destroyed, so nearly obliterated, that he forgot whether there was one God or many gods; whether his Maker was pure, truthful and good, or the impersonation of vice, lust and corruption! Just in proportion as the nations of the earth have appreciated the principles of justice, truth and holiness, have they been free, contented and happy, and just in proportion as they have refused "to retain God in their knowledge," have they been sinful, superstitious and degraded. What makes a man a heathen? Nothing more nor less than forgetting the true and living God. Does the Bible support these declarations? Let it speak for itself. It will make it plain. It never fails. The Lord is able to speak the truth, for all truth emanates from him. Man gradually wandered away from God, and therefore corrupted himself by degrees. Lust conceived and brought forth sin, and sin led him on to degradation. The departure from God began within—in the heart. It manifested itself without—in the life—and led to darkness. "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence; and God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth" (Gen. vi. 11, 12). "They are corrupt; they have done abominable works; there is none that doeth good. The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any that did understand and seek God. They are all gone aside; they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good; no, not one" (Ps. xiv. 1–3). "They have corrupted themselves; their spot is not the spot of his

children; they are a perverse and crooked generation" (Deut. xxxii. 5). "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever" (Rom. i. 21–25). "Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth" (I. Tim. vi. 5). "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isaiah lix. 2). This is a terrible picture. Why were the people, before the flood, corrupt? Because they forsook God and turned to evil. Why was the earth filled with violence? Because the people had, through their corrupt practices, lost their union with God. Why did David say there were none who did good? Because sin had corrupted their minds, and almost destroyed the likeness of God within them. Why did they refuse to glorify the one true and living God? Because they had drifted so far away from him that they would not honor his name, or respect his authority. Why did they become vain in their imaginations? Because sin had corrupted their thoughts. Why were their foolish hearts darkened? Because they had wilfully shut out the light of heaven. Why did they worship the creature more than the Creator? Because they had

forsaken and forgotten the true worship, but their disposition to worship remained; hence they deified the creature and despised the Creator. What separated the people from God? Sin. Why are the practices of sinful men an abomination in the sight of God? Because they are the products of sinful hearts—"minds devoid of judgment." They refuse to "retain God in their knowledge," and as there is no other way to retain him, to know him, or be filled with him, they naturally drifted into darkness. Without God. Deplorable condition! Without hope. Indescribably dreadful! No prospect for the life that is to come. Horror of horrors!

Why did Jesus Christ come into the world? In order to save the nations of the earth from sin, from heathenism, from corruption, and to restore us to union with God, to make us like God, like himself, and to drive sin, darkness and rebellion from the minds of men, and therefore from the world. When did he come? "For when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. vi. 6). Why were we without strength? Because we were without God; the image and likeness of God. Why were we without God? Because we had disobeyed him. What good did his life and death accomplish? "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (II. Cor. viii. 9). "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity,

and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus ii. 11–14). "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls" (I. Pet. ii. 24, 25). These passages bring out some significant facts: (1) All men were without strength, and had in some degree lost their image and likeness of God. (2) In our extremity Jesus Christ came to our relief; the grace or favor of God, bringing salvation to all men, appeared. (3) He redeemed the world. (4) This grace teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and live righteously, soberly and godly in this present world. (5) The people of God are "zealous of good works." (6) We have an opportunity to return to "the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls."

What does the "image and likeness of God" signify from the gospel standpoint? In creation it meant that man was the only creature that God made like unto himself. In other words, God gave to man in a limited degree that which he possessed in an unlimited abundance. The ability to think, to love, to sympathize, to forbear, to be gentle and forgiving; in short, everything that is good is derived from God. These faculties were given us at the creation. They are a part of our nature. What has sin done for the race? Let us see. There have been great thinkers through the ages, but no man will affirm that our progress has not been impeded and our achievements hindered by the corruptions of sin, the conflicting elements of society, and the frailties produced by disease. What a wonderful change sin produced in the hearts of men. Under its destructive influence the

image and likeness of God became a wreck, love became hatred, sympathy became selfishness, forbearance became fierceness, gentleness became spite, meekness became aggression, forgiveness became resentment, hope became a delusion, and faith became a ruin. Under the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ the likeness and image of God is recovered from the depths of darkness into which sin has plunged it: hatred becomes love, selfishness becomes sympathy, fierceness becomes forbearance, spite becomes gentleness, aggression becomes meekness, resentment becomes forgiveness, hope becomes the anchor of the soul, and faith becomes the mystic tie between the human and the divine. None of our mental, moral or spiritual faculties have been completely destroyed, but they have been weakened, perverted, lost in sin. The gospel of Christ proposes to deliver us from sin and reunite us to God. The man who puts himself completely under the control of Christ is made, or re-made, in the likeness of God. Do the Scriptures sustain these statements? "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rom. vi. 6). "If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus; that ye put off concerning the former conversation, the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor; for we are members one of another" (Eph iv. 21–25). "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him;

where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all. Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye; and above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness; and let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body" (Col. iii. 9–15).

What do you think of the mystery of God-likeness? God made man like unto himself. Man lost this likeness by transgression. The gospel is God's plan of restoration. Glorious, wonderful, world-embracing plan! What is it to be like God? He loves his enemies. If I, through the power of the truth, love my enemies, I am like God? He blesses those who despitefully use and dishonor him. If I do the same I am like him. He loves all men. I do the same, and I am therefore like unto my "Father who is in heaven." Are you like God? If not, you are not a Christian. Do you love your enemies? If not, you are not a child of God. Do you desire the salvation of the world? If not, God has not been restored to the control of your heart. Do you live for self? If you do, your heart is still impure. You can not—it is useless to try it—live a Christian until you become one, and you can not become one unless you are "created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Eph. ii. 10). How is this done? Jesus is the image of God (Col. i. 15). He is the revelation of wisdom, righteousness, power, goodness, justice, truth, holiness, mercy, love, gentleness, faith, obedience, meekness, power, forbearance, long-suffering, self-denial,

self-sacifice and liberality. You can not possess Christ unless you possess all of these. Everything depends upon whether you have Christ within you (Gal. iv. 9). If you have, you are like God; if you have not, you are on the road to ruin. Why do so many people have such low conceptions of the Christian life? Because they have not received Christ; because they have not been created anew, in the image and likeness of God. Just in proportion as God dwells in us will we be able to combat the evils of the world. The religion of the New Testament binds men to God; restores Him to the supremacy of mind and life. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (I. Cor. iii. 16, 17). "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God" (Eph. iii. 14–19). The Christian has Christ formed in him. He is filled with the Spirit. He is the temple of the living God. Christ dwells in his heart by faith. He is rooted and grounded in love. Have you Christ formed in you? Are you filled with the Spirit? Are you the temple of God? Does Jesus Christ dwell in your heart by faith? Are

you rooted and grounded in love? If not, how can you claim to be a Christian?

Has God a method of reaching the people, of driving sin from the heart, of reëstablishing himself in every faculty of the mind, and therefore in every act of the life? Is it a perfect method? Is it adapted to the wants of men? Will it destroy our love of sin? Will it keep us from transgressing the law of God? Will it enthrone God in the heart? What is it? The gospel of Jesus Christ. Is it enough to save us? All religious people admit that it is. Do their practices correspond with this concession? No. Examine their practices. Do they glorify the gospel? They turn away from it, and pray for God to send salvation down from heaven! This is inconsistent and contradictory, and it drives many honest men into infidelity. Let us come down to Bible facts. God's method of making men like himself is in harmony with our constitution, and our intellectual, moral and spiritual nature. Sin must be destroyed. How can it be done? It has led the minds of men into captivity; into the bondage of degradation. In order to conquer the lusts and passions of the flesh the mind must be enlightened, purified, captivated, by the truth, for it inspires in the heart an inclination, a determination, to do right. The more completely God is enthroned within, the more fully the life will conform to the requirements of the gospel. All actions proceed from the heart, the mind. Good actions come from the heart as God made it, or as it is cleansed by the gospel. Bad acts come from the perverted heart. You may condemn this as "head religion" if you wish, but I know of no religion—true religion—that does not involve the mind. Do you?

How did the Lord operate at the beginning (Luke

xxiv. 49)? Peter and his associates preached the gospel. Who were Peter and his co-laborers? The apostles of Jesus Christ. What gospel, or good news, did they preach? The gospel of Christ. Why did they preach the gospel of Christ? In order to convert the people, or turn them from sin. Why did they desire to turn them from sin? In order to make men like God. Why make them like God? In order to prepare their hearts for his indwelling, and unite him to them forever. Did they proceed as if they believed the gospel to-day sufficient to save the people? They did. Did they exhort the brethren to pray for converting power to descend upon the people? They did not. Why not? Because they had the power in the gospel of Christ. What was the position of the Jews in reference to the gospel? They were opposed to it. Why were they opposed to it? Because they were wicked unbelievers. What was the condition of their hearts? They were desperately sinful. Were they like God? Were they sinless, innocent, pure and good? They were transformed into the children of the devil by evil works. Did they believe in one God? Yes, but they did not respect his law. Were they seeking for light? They were contented in the darkness. Did God dwell in them? They were murderers! Were they filled with the Spirit? They were filled with malice. Were they governed by love? They followed their own way, regardless of truth or sympathy. What brought them together on the day of Pentecost? Nothing but idle curiosity. Did the apostles tell them that nothing but omnipotence could break their stony hearts? Certainly not. Why not? Because such a statement would have been false. What did they do? They reasoned with the people. They preached Christ and him crucified.

They directed their arguments to the minds of the people. Their words were freighted with truth, and therefore produced conviction in the minds of the people. The sermon is a startling arraignment of the people for their sins. Each thought was an arrow winged with light, and when it struck the heart it startled its possessor into a realization of his guilt before God. See the darkness fly! See the light of heaven pour into the soul! See the heart quiver under the power of divine truth! See the devil forsake the throne to which he had no right, and the Lord entering the heart as its rightful sovereign! See the dominion of ignorance, prejudice, hatred and disobedience crumble into ruin! See the desire to know and do the will of God burst from the heart into a living reality! This preaching pricked them in their heart. It pierced to the deepest depths of their understanding. They saw their condition in what they heard, in the gospel. Is it any wonder that fear took possession of them? Is it any wonder that sorrow for sin filled their hearts? Is it any wonder that they were stricken with grief? Is it any wonder that they cried from the depths of their broken hearts: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" What produced this change in these people? Hearing and believing the gospel. Why did they inquire what to do? Because they saw their condition. When the truth takes possession of a man and pricks his heart, and convicts him of his sins, he does not stop to argue, he inquires what to do, and does it at once. This question shows the condition of the man within: faith, fear, anxiety, willingness and trouble. Were they saved when they asked this question? If so, why did they ask it? Did the apostle answer it? Yes. Is his answer worthy of attention,

and is it an answer to people in a similar condition in all the ages of the world? It is. What was the answer? "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts ii. 38). What is repentance? A change of mind that leads to a reformation of life. What is baptism? A burial and resurrection (Rom. vi. 4). What is it for? The remission of sins. What follows the remission of sins? The gift of the Holy Spirit. This question and answer are applicable to us under similar circumstances. Preaching produced conviction, conviction produced the question, and the question called forth the answer. Did the people hesitate to do their duty when they had learned it? They did not. Did any penitents go away seeking, mourning or inquiring? Not one. The apostles had a definite plan. They were guided by the Lord. They told the people what to do, and they did it. They were added to the church. Were they saved? Were they made like unto God? Were they filled with the Spirit of truth? Did they put on "the new man"? Most assuredly! Suppose they had refused to "repent and be baptized," would they have been saved? No. A refusal would have been positive rebellion against the authority of Jesus Christ, and an undeniable evidence that their hearts were yet impure and that they loved their own ways more than they loved the way of God. Their baptism was the result of repentance; their repentance was the result of faith; their faith was the result of hearing; what they heard was the result of the preaching of the apostles; the preaching of the apostles was inspired by the Lord; hence he works in us both "to will and to do" (Phil. ii. 13) when we hear, believe and

obey the gospel of Christ. This is the way we have the mind of Christ (Phil. v. 2), or partake of the divine nature (II. Pet. i. 4).

The gospel is God's power; his only power unto salvation. It makes men like God when they receive and keep it in their hearts. It is the principle of union between God and man, and therefore the basis of union among the people of God. It made Christians of the people who heard it on the day of Pentecost, in the city of Samaria, and at the house of Cornelius. It is growing in influence, and it will continue its conquests until the world is turned to Christ. You have it on your hands. What will you do with it? Do you desire to be a Christian? Do you desire to be like God? Do you desire to be like Jesus? If so you may be "changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (II. Cor. iii. 18), and "be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (John iii. 2). Do you sigh for freedom from sin? Jesus Christ can make you free. Will you obey him? The New Testament reveals the way. It is unmistakably plain. Will you walk in it? On what are you building? What if God should call you now? Soon your soul will be required of you, and if you are not a Christian, what then? Death! the second death! eternal death!

SERMON IX.

DISOBEDIENCE.

TEXT: "But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile" (Rom. ii. 8, 9).

What does the Bible say about disobedience? Can we understand the Bible, and are we therefore responsible if we disobey it? Are you willing for it to testify for itself? Will you receive its admonitions? Will you abide by its decisions?

There are two ways of looking into this subject. (1) By finding what is said concerning disobedience; for when a blessing is promised to the obedient a curse is always implied for the disobedient. (2) By finding what is said concerning obedience itself. Does the Bible promise any special blessing to those who obey the Lord? or do his blessings descend upon us whether we are ready and willing to receive them or not? "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams; for rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry" (I. Sam. xv. 22, 23). "Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people; and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you" (Jer. vii. 23). "Though he were a Son, yet learned he

obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. v. 8, 9). "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth" (I. Pet. i. 22). "The word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" (Acts. vi. 7). "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts x. 34, 35). "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man" (Eccl. xii. 13). These passages teach us: (1) Obedience is better than sacrifice. (2) Rebellion, witchcraft, stubbornness, iniquity and idolatry are classed together. (3) God will be our God if we obey his voice. (4) It will be well with us if we walk in all the Lord's ways. (5) Jesus Christ is the author of eternal salvation unto all those who obey him. (6) We purify our soul in obeying the truth. (7) As the word of God increases men become "obedient to the faith." (8) Those in every nation who fear God and work righteousness are accepted with God. (9) The conclusion of the whole matter is to fear God and keep his commandments.

"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (I. Pet. iv. 17, 18). "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus

Christ" (II. Thes. i. 8). "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry; for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience" (Col. iii. 5, 6). "Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience" (Eph. v. 6). "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work devoid of judgment" (Titus i. 16). "They are of those that rebel against the light; they know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof" (Job xxiv. 13). "And this is the condemnation that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God" (John iii. 19–21). These passages assert: (1) That the righteous will scarcely be saved, and that there is no chance for the disobedient. (2) That the Lord will take vengeance on those who "know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." (3) That the wrath of God will come upon the children of disobedience. (4) That abominations and disobedience are closely connected. (5) That a man may profess to know God, and yet deny him in his works. (6) That we have the power to rebel against the light, and therefore against God. (7) That men love darkness because their doings are evil. (8) That those who do right are neither ashamed nor afraid of the light.

What is obedience? Yielding to the demands of

authority. What is disobedience? Refusing to respect or yield to the demands of authority. Any deviation, even in the remotest degree, is disobedience. Jesus Christ is supreme, and his authority must be respected. What produces obedience? An enlightened mind and a willing heart. What produces disobedience? A wicked mind and a rebellious heart. Who are the children of obedience or faith? Those who receive and obey the gospel. Who are the children of disobedience or unbelief? Those who wilfully pervert, contend against, or refuse to submit to the requirements of the gospel. Why do men obey the truth? Because they love and honor God. Why do many refuse to obey it? Because they love sin and hate the light. What will be the destiny of the obedient? They will be saved. What will be the destiny of the disobedient? They will be "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." Why did Jesus Christ come into the world? In order that he might reveal the will of God and subdue the world to his authority. Why was it necessary to reveal the will of God? In order that men might obey it. Why is it necessary for us to obey it? In order to the purification of our hearts, our minds, our lives. Why is it necessary for us to be pure? Because sin can not enter heaven. Have those who refuse to obey the gospel any promise of present or eternal salvation? Not one! Are you living in disobedience? If so, how can you expect the reward that is promised to the obedient? Are you sowing to the flesh? If you are, you will reap corruption! Do you expect everlasting life in the world to come? Are you worthy of it? Are you prepared to receive and enjoy it? God's word must stand. If it condemns you now

it will condemn you forever unless you repent. Think. "Everlasting destruction!" "Everlasting punishment!" "Everlasting shame and contempt!"

In how many ways may a man disobey the law of God? Four. What are they? Ask the Bible. What does it say? (1) By flatly, positively, and rebelliously refusing to do anything that it commands. "Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life" (John v. 40). "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not" (Luke xiii. 34)! (2) By adding to it, or (3) taking from it; by doing more or less than it requires. "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you" (Deut. iv. 2). "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it; thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it" (Deut. xii. 32). "Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar" (Prov. xxx. 6). "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Rev. xxii. 18, 19). (4) By substituting something else for it. "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in

their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink: which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him! Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust; because they have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the holy one of Israel" (Isaiah v. 20–24). "Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourself about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow" (Isaiah l. 11). The passages contain some significent facts: (1) We have no right to substitute light for darkness, or darkness for light. (2) It is a violation of the law of God to put evil for good, or good for evil. (3) The wisdom and prudence of man are as nothing in the sight of God. (4) The prophet pronounces a woe upon those who "mingle strong drink" and "justify the wicked for reward." (5) We may kindle our own fires and walk in the light of them if we choose. (6) God has decreed that all such "shall lie down in sorrow." (7) Those who substitute their ways for the Lord's way, cast away his law and despise his word.

God has been speaking to men through all the ages of the world. What have they done with his word? Some have rejected it entirely. Others have added something to it. Others have done less than it demands. Others have substituted their frail opinions for the truth. These four propositions cover every act of disobedience in religion, in the family, in the government, and in nature. A father commands his son to do a certain piece of work.

What can he do with this command? Either obey it or disobey it. How can he obey it? By doing exactly what is required. How can he disobey it? By positively rejecting the command; by adding something to it; by taking something from it; or by substituting something else for the will of his Father. A government sends a man to represent it at a foreign court. His instructions are full, complete and unmistakably plain. What can he do with them? He can obey them or disobey them. How can he obey them? By doing his duty in every particular. How can he disobey them? By abandoning them altogether; by adding something to them; by taking something from them; or by substituting something else for them. God freely gives us the air we breathe. What can we do with it? Either accept it or reject it. How can we accept it? By breathing it fully and continuously. How can we reject it? By closing the avenues by which it enters our lungs; by adding something to it; by refusing to receive it continuously; or by attempting to substitute something else for it. Suppose we refuse to breathe the air of heaven, has God any other method of perpetuating life? None! God offers us the bread of life. What can we do with it? Either accept it or reject it. How can we accept it? By eating it in order to eternal life. How can we reject it? By turning away from it entirely; by adding something to it; by taking something from it; or by substituting something else for it. God is speaking to you! What will you do with his word? Will you refuse to hear him; accept only a part of what he says; add your opinions and conclusions to it; or substitute some other religion for it? In either case you would disobey him. God commands us to believe. What can

we do with this command? Either obey it or disobey it. How can we obey it? By accepting the truth with the whole heart. How can we disobey it? By disbelieving it altogether; by believing only a part; by believing too much; or by believing something else. He commands us to repent. How can we obey this command? By changing our minds and reforming our lives. How can we disobey it? By stopping our ears against it; by turning from only a part of our sins; by adding to the requirement; or by substituting something to balance against our transgressions? He commands us to confess our faith in Jesus Christ. How can we obey this command? By acknowledging with the mouth our faith in Jesus as "the Son of the living God." How can we disobey it? By turning away from it entirely; by confessing that he lived, but denying his divinity; by adding something to the "good confession"; or by confessing our faith in the speculations of men. He commands penitent believers to be baptized. How can we obey this command? By doing what the New Testament requires. How can we disobey it? By treating it with contempt; by adding something to it; by taking something from it; or by substituting sprinkling or pouring for the demands of the gospel of Christ.

Unbelief and disobedience have been the cause of all the divisions, contentions and troubles that have befallen the Church of Christ since its establishment in the city of Jerusalem. What caused the great apostasy? Men refused to hear the word of God; added to its revelations; failed to do all that it required; and substituted their weak productions and unreliable speculations for the word of the living God. What produces, fosters and perpetuates division among the people of God? The

substitution of human tests of fellowship for the New Testament. What produced the denominations of modern times? Disobedience to the word of God. Why do men refuse to receive the gospel of Christ? Because of unbelief and hardness of heart. Why do many professing Christians reject a part of it? Because their faith is too weak to accept the entire plan. Why is their faith weak? Because they do not search the Scriptures. Why do they add their speculations to its demands? Because, in their ignorance, they think that the pure and simple truth is insufficient to save them. Why do they substitute their inventions for the appointments of heaven? Because of pride, ignorance and superstition. Why are men proud? Because they refuse to see their condition as the Lord reveals it in his word. Why are they ignorant? Because they do not ask the Bible for information. Why are they superstitious? Because they have never been divorced from their idols!

We have no right to interfere with the word of God, and we can only do it at our peril. When he says a thing is true it is our duty to believe it. When he commands, it is our duty to obey. We can not deviate "one jot or one tittle" from the truth and claim to live in obedience to the law of Christ. No man can claim any of the blessings of the New Testament unless he does everything it requires, in the manner, at the time and for the purpose ordained by the Lord. Do you say this is despotic? I deny it. A law is a dead letter unless it demands the absolute respect, confidence and obedience of the people. If a man can trample on the law of Christ through life and be saved in the end, it is the most stupendous system of deception that the world has ever known! If God saves men who do not live in obedi-

ence to his word he honors them more than the obedient, and therefore become a respecter of persons. Does God speak foolishness to his creatures? Such a thought is absurd. Does he give them a law, and then bless them in disobedience, before they submit to all of his requirements? Does he save one when he believes; another when he believes and repents; another when he believes, repents and confesses Christ; another when he believes, repents, confesses Christ and is baptized? Does he save men when they come to die, obedience or no obedience? If he does his practices contradict his word, and he is partial in his dealings with men. God forbid that I should harbor in my heart a thought so wicked and rebellious as this! Here are two men. The first one obeys the gospel and lives a life of honesty, sobriety and self-denial. The other one is contentious, and refuses to obey the truth. He comes down to his death-bed. His body is paralyzed by disease. The gates of hell open before him. He does everything in his power to live, but the physicians shake their heads in dismay, and inform him that he must die. What is the result? When he finds that he can not live and serve himself and the devil any longer, he sends for a preacher. What does the preacher do? He sings and prays. In his struggle between life and death the man "professes a change," and passes away. At the funeral his life is held up to the admiration and for the imitation of his friends, and his relations are consoled with the assurance that he is "asleep in Jesus," and that they may meet him in the eternal kingdom. Did this man believe the word of truth? He did not, for he knew nothing about it. Did he repent? No; he held on to his sins until he was unable to continue in his wicked practices. Did he con-

fess Christ while he was in health? Was he baptized? Did he die in Christ? No, most emphatically! Did he obey the gospel? Not in a single requirement. Was he saved? Not according to the Bible.

The gospel is the standard of attainment, and it is our unchangeable duty to do all that it requires. The Lord promises aliens the forgiveness of sins, and membership in the Church of Christ, on the conditions of faith and obedience, and he can not accept them on fewer conditions unless he disregards his word. Can he admit you into his kingdom, into his love, into his name, while you disregard his will and trample his mercies under your feet? He promises the Christian an abundant entrance into the home of the pure and good on the conditions of godliness, righteousness and sobriety. Can he accept you, my brother, if you live exclusively for yourself? The way to heaven includes (1) faith in Christ and obedience to the gospel in order to the remission of past sins and admission into the kindgom on earth; and (2) faithful living in order to deliverance from all temptation and sin, and admission into the kingdom above. No Bible student will dispute these assertions. Men who never study the word of God are apt to be contentious, and ready to dispute anything that does not harmonize with their opinions. What will be the destiny of those who do not obey the gospel "for the remission of sins that are past"; who have never honored Jesus Christ by putting him on in his appointed way; whose characters have been a standing menace to the purity of society and the authority of the Lord? Can they shake off their sins when they lie down to die? Can they undo a sinful life and prepare for heaven in the delirium of death? Can they compromise with the opportunities they have

insulted, and gain the approval of God, while battling with disease? Can they go to heaven just because they do not want to go to hell? Do you answer in the affirmative? You can not feed yourself on a more fatal and soul-destroying delusion!

Obedience is a straight line. God has marked this line deep and clear. There is no excuse for the disobedient. They rebel against light and knowledge, and "tribulation and anguish" will be their inevitable destiny. They contend against the truth, and their eternal portion will be "indignation and wrath." The Scriptures abound with illustrations proving conclusively that the Lord will not permit any deviation from his word. He means what he says, no more, no less. God is no respecter of persons. He is absolutely impartial in his dealings with men. If you die, therefore, it will be your own fault; you will be the author of your own destruction. Why did Moses and Aaron die before they reached the promised land? Because they rebelled against the word of God (Num. xx. 24). How did they rebel against it? The children of Israel came into the desert of Zin, and they murmured because there was no water. Moses and Aaron went to the Lord. He told them what to do: (1) Take the rod. (2) Assemble the people. (3) Speak to the rock. Were these instructions explicit? They were. What did Moses and Aaron do? Moses took the rod, as the Lord commanded him to do. They gathered the congregation together before the rock. Moses spoke to the people and smote the rock twice! Presumption! disobedience! rebellion! What was the penalty? "The Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this

congregation into the land which I have given them" (Num. xx. 1–12). Moses substituted his way for the Lord's way, and the Lord said unto him: "Thou shalt not go thither unto the land which I give the children of Israel" (Deut. xxxii. 52). Do you say the difference between what God commanded and what Moses and Aaron did was unimportant? Let us see. They received three commands. They obeyed two of them, and disobeyed the other, and yet they disobeyed God in four particulars: (1) They rebelled against his word. (2) They did too much. (3) They did not do enough. (4) They substituted their way for the demands of God. Again, the children of Israel became "grieved because of the way," and they "spake against God, and against Moses." The Lord sent fiery serpents among them. Thousands were bitten. They saw their condition and confessed their sins. Moses asked God what to do. The Lord told him what to do: (1) Make a serpent of brass. (2) Put it upon a pole. (3) Those who would look upon it would be healed. Suppose Moses had made a serpent of gold, put it on the ground, and had commanded the people to touch it, what would have been the result? Not a single one would have been saved. Hence the great necessity of adhering strictly, conscientiously and continuously to what the Lord commands. Suppose Moses had made a brass ox and put it on the pole, or suppose he had utterly rejected the instructions of the Lord. His wrath would have been poured out upon the defenseless host (Num. xxi. 4–9). Woe to the man or angel that rejects the word of God. Naaman, the captain of the hosts of the King of Syria, was a leper. A captive maiden from the land of Israel told him of the prophet Elisha. He went to the land of

Israel, and applied to the king for restoration to health. The king was insulted. The prophet heard of this, and sent word to the king to send the leper to him. Naaman came with great splendor, and stood at Elisha's door. He sent a messenger to him, and commanded him, saying: "Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean." "But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, he will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean? So he turned, and went away in a rage. And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? How much rather, then, when he saith to thee, Wash and be clean? Then went he down and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean" (II. Kings v. 1–14). Why did Naaman, at first, refuse to "wash and be clean"? Because the blessing did not come in his way! He was disappointed because the prophet did not do some great thing. Why did he want to wash in some other water? Because he had not learned the lesson of obedience. What would have been the result if he had dipped himself seven times in the Abana? He would have lived and died a leper! Observe the command: "Go wash in Jordan seven times." Seven times. Not one time, or six times, but seven times! What does the word wash mean? Dip or immerse. Suppose he had

rejected the command; added something to it; taken something from it; or substituted something else for it, what would have been the result? He would have received the reward of the disobedient! In the ninth chapter of John we learn that Jesus opened the eyes of a blind man. In what way was it done? He anointed his eyes with clay and spittle, and commanded him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam, and he obeyed and came seeing. This man was trustful, obedient, honest; hence he did precisely what the Lord commanded him to do. He had the power to reject the commandment of Jesus entirely, to add to it, to take from it, or to do something else in its place, but he chose to do his whole duty and leave the results in the hands of the Saviour. What power opened this man's eyes? The power of God. At what time were his eyes opened? When he became obedient to the command of Christ. What power restored the bitten Israelites? The power of God. When were they restored? When they obeyed the Lord. What power cured Naaman of his leprosy? The power of God. At what time was he cleansed? When he obeyed the instructions of the man of God. What power saves men from the love and dominion of sin? The power of God. When? At the very moment they comply with the conditions of the gospel.

What expelled Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden? Disobedience. What caused the flood? Disobedience. What kept Moses and Aaron out of the promised land? Disobedience? What dethroned Saul, the first king of Israel? Disobedience. What caused the destruction of the Jewish nation, and their subsequent dispersion among all the nations of the earth? Disobedience. What delays the conversion of the world?

Disobedience. What keeps you out of the Church of Christ? Disobedience. What elevates the creeds into tests of fellowship? Disobedience. What curses the world, and bolts forever the gates of heaven to many? Disobedience.

Are you a Christian? Are you a Bible Christian? Are you an obedient Christian? Are you an earnest Christian? Are you a faithful Christian? If not, what are you? Do you ever reject the truth? Do you ever add anything to it? Do you ever take anything from it? Do you ever substitute anything else for it? If you do either, God will curse you in the coming day! God has never compromised with sin—rebellion—and he never will. Do you reject the name of Jesus Christ? Do you add anything to it? Do you take anything from it? Do you substitute a human name for it? If so, how can you claim to be a member of his church? Do you search the Scriptures? Do you obey the truth unreservedly, steadfastly, continuously? Everything depends upon you. God has done his part; the way to heaven is complete, and you must accept it or suffer. God said to Cain: "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well sin lieth at the door" (Gen. iv. 7). Moses said: "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; a blessing if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day; and a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known" (Deut. xi. 26–28). Joshua said: "Choose you this day whom ye will serve" (Josh. xxiv. 15). Elijah said: "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow

him; but if Baal, follow him" (I. Kings xviii. 21). Jesus Christ said: "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye can not serve God and mammon" (Matt. vi. 24). James said: "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (Jas. iv. 17). Will you be a Christian? Will you be a Christian according to the Bible? Will you begin to-day?

SERMON X.

GOD IS, AND OUR RELATION TO HIM.

TEXT: "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. xi. 6).

"God is." How deep! How glorious! How wonderful! How profound! Language can not reveal it. An attempt to describe his glories shows the weakness of even the grandest triumphs of human speech. We can not measure his dominion or encompass the wonders of his kingdom while we tread the vale of sorrow, sin and death. God is the source of all things natural, spiritual and eternal. He is, was, and evermore shall be. Can your mind grasp the thought? Can you count the drops of water in the ocean? Can you count the stars in the vault of heaven? Can you estimate the number of worlds in limitless space? Can time measure eternity? Can the finite comprehend the infinite? Can the human endure the uncreated radiance, majesty and power of the Uncreated? Can our faint reverberations of the notes of Eden lost, equal the triumphant symphonies of heaven? With burdened hearts, with quivering lips, and with tear-stained eyes, we exclaim from the measureless depths of our fears, our unworthiness, our sins: "Woe is me, for I am undone!"

We stand within the narrow limits of human life and gaze backward beyond the time when our eyes first

saw the light; beyond the struggles of the Reformation, beyond the Dark Ages; beyond the death of the apostles; beyond the beginning of the gospel in the city of Jerusalem; beyond the ascension and glorification of Jesus Christ; beyond his wonderful life and birth; beyond the wilderness in which John the Baptist broke the silence of four hundred years; beyond Malachi, the valedictorian of the Old Testament; beyond Jeremiah's tear-burdened wail, and Isaiah's song of triumph; beyond Solomon's shame and David's glory; beyond the crossing over Jordan; beyond the Red Sea; beyond Israel's bondage in Egypt; beyond Melchizedek, the priest of God; beyond Abraham, the prince of the patriarchs; beyond the flood; beyond Adam's death and life; beyond the crumbling gates of man's primeval home; beyond creation's morning; beyond, yes, beyond the limit of an archangel's flight through countless years, and God, our Father, is from everlasting to everlasting! Reversing our telescope, we look beyond the boundary lines of our present existence; beyond the grave that opens to receive us; beyond the trumpet's sound through land and sea; beyond the resurrection morning; beyond the second coming of Christ; beyond the wild, destructive flames that will consume both earth and sky; beyond the judgment day; beyond the gates of the city of God; beyond, yes, infinitely beyond the most extended flight of the imagination, and God, our Father, is from everlasting to everlasting!

"God is." He knows all things. He is the fountain of all power. He sees all things. We can not escape his knowledge of our sins. We can not escape his power. We can not go beyond his eyes. We can not resist his judgment. We can not escape destruction if we refuse to

obey his will. What do you think of him? Do you love and serve him? David said: "O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine uprising; thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and thou art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I can not attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou are there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me; even thy night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to thee" (Psa. cxxxix. 1–12). Job said: "For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings. There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves" (Job xxxiv. 21, 22). Solomon said: "For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings" (Prov. v. 21). Paul said: "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb. iv. 13). "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Rom. xii. 19). "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. x. 31). "But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries" (Heb. x. 27). "For our God is a con-

suming fire" (Heb. xii. 29). "In flaming fire taking vengeance on those that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (II. Thes. i. 8, 9). Peter said: "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers; but the face of the Lord is upon them that do evil" (I. Pet. iii. 12). These are living coals from the altar of God; thoughts inspired by heaven and winged with fire. Do they not startle you from your long dreams of rest in sin? Do you not see that God is angry with your sins every day? Can you claim security when you know you are a sinner in the government of God? Do you not know that your life is an insult to the love and goodness of your Maker? Do you not know that you are unfit for the society of the redeemed in heaven, and therefore in danger of hell? Do you not know life is uncertain, and that you can not shake off the character you are building when you come to your dying bed? Do you want to be accursed when Jesus comes again? If you live and die in your sins, you will deserve nothing less!

"God is." Do you fear him? Do you honor his name? Do you respect his government? Do you rely upon his promises? Stop a moment and give an honest thought to the most wonderful subject within the range of your imagination. We look, we think, we meditate, and the thought sinks deeper, grows greater, soars higher, until we are lost in his boundless dominion, and the mind, "burdened, crushed and affrighted, flies into the little temple, bolts the door, and attempts to hide itself forever."

The existence of God lies back of all the revelations

in the wondrous volumes of Creation, Providence and Redemption. He is over all his works and blessed for evermore. Look at creation. See him roll worlds from his mighty hands. You must meet the Creator of all these things face to face. He holds the universe into one grand, harmonious system. Can he not punish you for your offenses? No sparrow falls to the ground without his notice, and yet you think you can insult his law and hide from his wrath! Do these thoughts stir your soul to its depths? If so, look to the Cross of Christ. It exhibits infinite love, divine condescension and mercy as inexhaustible as the wants of men. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life; for God sent not his Son to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John iii. 16, 17). Angels, lift your harps on high and ring redemption's anthems through the skies! Lift your notes of "victory through the Lamb," and let all creation echo the glad refrain: "the Messiah reigns!" You must believe in God, "that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him," and in his Son, Jesus Christ. No power but God can lift us out of sin. We can not get hold of him save "through faith." This faith is transcendently important. Without it no man can please God, or call God his Father. In the presence of eternity look away from self, from earth, from time's alloy, to the source of all love, all power, all goodness. God is a living reality, Christ is a living reality, the Holy Spirit is a living reality, and not what our imaginations paint them. They know, and think, and feel, for these principles in humanity are the "likeness and image of God." We believe, therefore, in

One who "ever liveth." This faith, this belief, reëstablishes the union between the Creator and the creature; between the visible and the invisible; between the Creator reconciled and the sinner saved. To the unbeliever there is no God, no Christ, no "Spirit of Truth," no heaven, no hell. To the consecrated and obedient believer God is a Father, Jesus Christ is a Saviour, a personal and ever-present Saviour, the Holy Spirit is the comforter, heaven is a glorious reality, and future punishment the inevitable result of sinful living. God has revealed himself, manifested himself, or made himself known. He does not hide himself in the clouds and darkness as he did in the past. He came down to us. He loved us, and sent his Son to redeem us. We can approach him without fear or hesitation. He invites us to come. He will not, he can not, deny us. He offers us bread. He offers us the water of life. He offers us all things. He will not drive us away empty. Do you doubt his power? Do you doubt his willingness to save you? Do you doubt that he is ready to save you now? Do you, can you, doubt his love and mercy? See him weep at the grave of Lazarus. Can you longer reject him? See him die on the cross. Oh! look, he dies for you! See him rise in victory from the grave. Is he not worthy of all honor? We are not required to look to visions, dreams and angelic visitations, but to Jesus Christ, whose love is boundless, whose knowledge is unsearchable, whose authority is universal. To one whose heart beats in unison with every pulsation of grief the world over. What an ocean of thought there is in the assurance that "he that keepeth thee shall neither slumber nor sleep." "Unto him be glory in the Church, by Jesus Christ, throughout all ages, world without end."

Do you feel the weight of sin? "Behold the Lamb of God which beareth away the sin of the world" (John i. 29). Do you seek for light? Jesus is "the light of the world" (John ix. 5). Are you asking for the way to heaven? Jesus is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John xiv. 6). Do you feel the heavy yoke of your sinful bondage? "If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John viii. 36). Do you tremble when you think of death and judgment? "Perfect love casteth out fear" (I. John iv. 18). Do you want something secure on which to stand? "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day and forever" (Heb. xii. 18.) He does not change. He has the same sympathetic heart that he had at the bedside of suffering eighteen hundred years ago. He has the same power at this moment that he had when he commanded the raging waves to be still. He is just as strong now as when he broke the seal of the grave and arose to die no more. The same Saviour; loving, tender, sympathetic Saviour! Think! Will you look to him? Will you love him? Will you receive him? Will you believe him? Will you obey him? Will you honor his name? Will you live for his cause? If not, on what do you base your hopes for a mansion of rest in his kingdom?

What is the faith or belief we must have in order to please God? It is evidently something in man that takes hold of God. It is an act of the mind. It is, in brief, to receive Jesus Christ as the Father has revealed him. Faith is based upon the truth. It therefore looks beyond the transcient to the eternal. "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (II. Cor.

iv. 18). "Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him" (Heb. x. 38). God speaks. I hear and accept what he says. This is faith. God speaks. I hear and accept a part, but reject the remainder. This is infidelity. God speaks. I hear, believe and obey what he commands. This is faith at work. God speaks. I hear, believe and obey what I like. This is infidelity—the rankest and meanest kind of infidelity—at work. God presents his Son as the only Saviour of sinners. I believe him. I receive him. I obey him. I receive life. I receive all things. I become an heir of eternal life.

Is there more than one faith? There is only one (Eph. iv. 5), according to the testimony of the Apostle Paul. "Till we all come into the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. iv. 13) The "one faith," is the faith that the Bible requires. It is living, active, real. It is confidence, reliance, trust. It is willingness, submission, obedience. It is hearty, earnest, constant. It is mental, consoling, unmovable. Do you believe?

What must a man believe in order to be a Christian; in order to receive the remission of sins; in order to enter into the kingdom of God; in order to be an heir of heaven? On what foundation must our faith rest? "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I. Cor. iii. 11). Here are three passages to which you will do well to attend: "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (I. Cor. ii. 5). "For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block,

and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (I. Cor. i. 22–24). "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth: to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. i. 16). Our faith stands in the power of God unto salvation. We are required to believe in Jesus as the Son of the living God (Matt. xvi. 16). Not in an imaginary Jesus, a theological Jesus, nor simply an historical Jesus, but in a personal "friend and brother," who knows our wants and woes. This, of course, includes faith in God, as set forth in the text. Here is the foundation of the Christian faith. God is. Jesus Christ is his Son. He has the keys of death and hell (Rev. i. 18). He is willing and able to save the world (Matt. xi. 28–30). The Emmanuel, "God with us," is the center of the Bible; the center of all authority in heaven and in earth; the center of the world's hopes; the pillar of the true religion. There is life in believing; not in the simple act of believing, but in "the Christ," the truth believed. One man believes and is saved because he believed the truth. Another man believes and is damned because he does not believe in "the only begotten Son of God" (John iii. 18). The proposition is not concerning an abstruse theological question, but concerning a person. Is he divine? Is he the Son of God? Is he your Saviour? There are perhaps many questions in the speculations of men that you can not settle, but you can settle this one in a moment. Do you love Jesus? Are you willing to do what he requires, and trust him for salvation? Do you reject him? If you do, the speculations of the world can not save you, and you are condemned. You can not accept Jesus, and

reject his word. You can not turn from sin and be saved unless you do it in his way.

How does faith come, and what produces it? Is it the act of God, or the act of men? Is it miraculous, or does it come through the truth? Does it lay hold of the truth, or is it the supposed direct impartation of the Holy Spirit? Does a man know whether or not he is a believer? If so, how? If not, why not? There is only one way. This can not be denied. If faith is an act of God, or direct gift from God, man is not responsible for what he does. It is not a question with him whether he is a believer or an unbeliever. If man can not believe, why does God command him to do so? Why does God threaten him with eternal damnation, destruction, death, for failing? Is there anything in the Bible that produces the conviction in the heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God? Let the truth speak for itself: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John xx. 30, 31). Why were these things written? In order that men might believe. Believe what? That Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God? Why believe this? In order that we may have life through his name. Why do we have life through his name? Because there is no other way to life (Acts iv. 11, 12). The Bereans were more noble than the Thessalonians (Acts xvii. 11). Why were they more noble? Because they searched the Scriptures daily. Why did they search the Scriptures? In order to see if the preaching of Paul and Silas was true. What was the result? Many of them believed. Why did they believe? Because they found the

truth. Where did they find it? In the Scriptures. Did they believe any more than the revealed truth? There is no evidence of it. Are you noble, like the Bereans? Do you receive the word with all readiness of mind? Do you search the Scriptures, or simply read a chapter occasionally? Is your faith weak? Do you answer in the affirmative? If you refuse to read the Bible there is no help for you. "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John xii. 48). Do you reject the words of Jesus? Then you reject him. Do you refuse to obey the truth? It will reject you in the last day. Will the word produce faith in the willing heart? If not, how can it judge us in the last day? Will the Lord judge by a different standard from that by which he requires us to live? "So, then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. x. 17). This is clear, emphatic, and final. God gives us the facts and the testimony, but we must believe or be damned (Mark xvi. 16).

Divine truth is the medium of communication between man and his Redeemer. The Lord has spoken. Carry the glorious news to earth's remotest bounds. When a man goes beyond the power of the cross he is beyond all power to save him. Sound out the word. When it falls upon the dreary wastes of the human heart, they become springs of living water; deserts blossom as the rose, and the dumb sing. We are the custodians of the truth. It is our duty to preach it fully, earnestly, faithfully. Let us plant the standard of the cross in every land beneath the circle of the sun, and, with the songs of Zion, following the sun and keeping company with the hours as they glide away into the eternal years, engirdle the earth

with the incense of the devotion of every heart, while the angels sound the glad anthem of the free against the gates of pearl and through the city of God for evermore!

Faith purifies the heart, expands the hope, controls the body, and guides the life to the glory and honor of God. Is it possible for a man to believe in God, in Christ, in the truth, with all his heart, and still have an impure heart, a bad heart, a wicked heart, a rebellious heart? "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things" (Matt. xii. 35). "And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith" (Acts xv. 9). "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. i. 27). "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Col. iii. 9, 10). Christ aims at the heart, the very center of our being. It does not create within us any new faculties, but turns those that we have already from sinful uses to the service of God. Faith makes the Bible a real book, makes heaven a real place, makes sin an awful crime against God and the cross of Christ, the source of redemption. It transforms the trials of this life into a school of mercy to prepare us for the city of God. It enables us to "fight the fight of faith" (I. Tim. vi. 12) like Moses of old, "seeing him that is invisible" (Heb. xi. 27). All true worship and obedience come from within, and no outside observances will save you if your heart is wrong in the sight of God. Do you desire to do right? Fill your heart with the truth, with the gospel of Christ. Keep your heart clean and willing, and your life will easily conform itself to the requirements of

Christ, but do not depend on "faith alone," for without works it is dead (Jas. ii. 17). Our lives are governed by what we believe. If we believe the truth it is our guide. If we do not believe it, it can not guide us. The life of the Christian is the exact copy of the heart, and the heart is the exact product of "Christ in us" through the truth. Everything that is required of us, is the natural outgrowth of our faith. Forsaking sin is an act of faith. Confessing Christ is an act of faith. Baptism is an act of faith. Godliness is an act of faith. Sobriety is an act of faith. Righteousness is an act of faith. Honoring the name of Jesus Christ is an act of faith. Sending the gospel to the ends of the earth is an act of faith. In fact, the Christian life, from the obedience of faith to the end of life, is the result of our faith in God, in Christ, in the truth. The genuine believer does not hesitate to do his whole duty, and does not compromise the gospel by doing only a part of what it demands. Do you believe in God? Show it by your works. Do you believe in Christ? If so, why do you refuse to obey him? Do you believe the Bible? If so, why do your practices dishonor it? Are you a Christian? If so, let your light shine!

God sees you and knows your heart. The future lies before you. Where will you spend it? Eternity! eternity!! eternity!!! See the unbeliever. He trembles on the brink of ruin. Look! He drops. He is gone! gone crashing!! gone forever!!! You are drifting! drifting!! drifting!!! on and forever. Soon the surging waves will open and receive you, and then, too late! too late!! too late!!!

"My hopes and fears
Start up alarmed, and o'er Life's narrow verge
Look down—on what? A fathomless abyss;
A dread eternity! how surely mine!"

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